



S. F. Ravenet Sculp.

T H E
Great Importance
O F A
Religious L I F E
C O N S I D E R E D :

To which are added,
Some Morning and Evening
P R A Y E R S.

The TWENTY-FIRST EDITION, Corrected.

L O N D O N :

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A S H O R T
C H A R A C T E R
O F T H E
A U T H O R

Of the following

T R E A T I S E.

IT may add Weight, perhaps, to the Reflections contained in the following Pages, to inform the Reader, that the Author's Life was one uniform Exemplar of those Precepts, which, with so generous a Zeal and such an elegant and affecting Simplicity of Style, he endeavours to recommend to general Practice. He left others to contend for Modes of Faith, and inflame themselves and the World with endless Controversy : it was the wiser Purpose of his more ennobled Aim, to act up to those clear Rules of Conduct which Revelation has graciously prescribed. He possessed by Temper every moral Virtue ; by Religion every Christian Grace. He had a Human-

nity that melted at every Distress ; a Charity which not only thought no Evil, but suspected none. He exercised his Profession with a Skill and Integrity, which nothing could equal but the disinterested Motive that animated his Labours, or the amiable Modesty which accompanied all his Virtues. He employed his Industry, not to gratify his own Desires ; no Man indulged himself less : not to accumulate useless Wealth ; no Man more disdained so unworthy a Pursuit : it was for the decent Advancement of his Family, for the generous Assistance of his Friends, for the ready Relief of the Indigent. How often did he exert his distinguished Abilities, yet refuse the Reward of them, in Defence of *the Widow, the Fatherless, and him that had none to help him !* In a word, few have ever passed a more useful, not one a more blameless Life ; and his whole Time was employed either in doing Good, or in meditating it. He died on the 6th Day of *April* 1743, and lies buried under the Cloister of *Lincoln's Inn* Chapel. MEM. PAT. OPT. MER. FIL. DIC.

THE

P R E F A C E.



THE Design of the following Treatise, is to awaken in the Minds of unthinking Men, a serious Sense of Religion and a true Concern for the Interest of their immortal Souls: a Design, at all Times seasonable and necessary, but more especially at this Time, when we see such Numbers of Persons carried away with the Love of Pleasure, and such Arts invented and Methods used, to gratify their corrupt and vicious Taste.

Whoever reflects, with a due Concern, upon the Excesses and Debaucheries which have over-spread this Nation, and has any Regard for the Honour of God and the Interest of that Holy Religion, which Christ Jesus came down from Heaven to establish upon the Earth, will easily be persuaded to think, that all Endeavours possible ought to be used, to stem the
Torrent

P R E F A C E.

Torrent of Wickedness that is broken in upon us, and to prevent the mischievous Effects of those public Diversions, which the Generality of People are grown so fond of; I mean the Masquerades and Plays: those Seminaries of Vice and Irreligion, where every Thing is contrived to inflame the Passions, and corrupt the tender Minds of young Persons, and which, I am persuaded, have greatly contributed to that general Neglect of God and Religion, which is so visible amongst us.

Whether any Thing that is here offered, will be effectual to draw Men off from the Love of those deceitful Vanities, I cannot say: but sure I am, (if the Scripture is to be the Rule of our Practice, as most undoubtedly it is) it must be the Duty of every one, not only to take care that he gives no Encouragement by his Example, to these licentious and insnaring Entertainments, (to which I doubt not but many owe their fatal Miscarriages) but to do what in him lies, to dissuade others, especially those under his Care, from resorting to Places of so much Danger and Infection.

It must be confessed, it is no easy Matter to prevail on those who are carried away by the false Maxims and Practices of a corrupt and debauched

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debauched World, to abandon their sensual Gratifications, for the more refined Pleasures of Virtue and Religion: However, the Difficulty of the Work should not discourage any one from attempting it. I have therefore endeavoured, according to my Ability, to lay before the Reader the Advantages attending a good Life; in Hopes, that whoever seriously considers what is here said, will be convinced, that there is no Pleasure to be compared with that of a good Conscience; and that Religion really is, what it was designed by the great Author of it to be, the only solid Foundation of our present, as well as future, Happiness.

I am sensible, that what is here offered, hath been with much greater Advantage inculcated in many of those excellent Discourses, which are already extant: yet when I consider how much Good has been done by these small Tracts, which have been printed and dispersed of late Years, I am encouraged to hope this little Treatise may be of some Service; at least, to check that prodigious Thirst after sensual Pleasures, which seems to be the Disease of the present Age, and which must undoubtedly destroy the Love of God, wherever it prevails.

I have

I have added some Prayers at the End of this Book, not with an Intention to prescribe to any one, but to assist those that are not furnished with better Helps; well knowing how important a Duty Prayer is, and how highly necessary it is for every good Christian to be frequent in his Addresses to the Throne of Grace, if ever he expects the Favour of God, and hopes to find GRACE to help in Time of Need.

May God of his great Goodness give a Blessing to these weak Endeavours, and make them instrumental to His Glory, and the Good of Souls!





THE
GREAT IMPORTANCE
OF A
RELIGIOUS LIFE.

CHAP. I.

WHAT must I do to be saved? was a Question, which the trembling and astonished Jailer put to *Paul and Silas*, when he saw the Prison-Doors opened in a miraculous manner: a Question of the utmost Moment and Importance, and which it nearly concerns us all to be well resolved in. For, if there be a Life after this, and we do not lie like the *Beasts that perish*; if Death does not put a final Period to our Beings; but when this short Life is ended, we enter upon the Regions of Eternity, and shall be for ever happy, or miserable, according

The Great Importance

as we demean ourselves in this short time of Trial and Probation : If this be the State and Condition of Mankind (as the Voice of Reason, the Dictates of Conscience, and the Holy Scriptures, do loudly proclaim it is) how does it behove every one of us to inquire, what we must do to attain everlasting Life ; and to consider, whether we are in the Way that leads to Heaven and Happiness? or, if we have been so unhappy as to wander out of it, how we may recover ourselves and return to it again ?

This is an Inquiry that deserves our utmost Diligence and Attention. For if we are ignorant of the Will of God, or, knowing it, will not follow or be led by that unerring Light, but suffer ourselves to be hurried away by our unruly Passions in the Pursuit of the things of this Life ; we are wretched and miserable, blind and naked notwithstanding all our Attainments ; and we shall one Day be convinced to our Sorrow, that there is no Folly like that of preferring Things temporal to eternal. *Whatever the Children of the*



Of a RELIGIOUS LIFE.

3

World may think, and how much soever they may applaud their own Wisdom in contriving Schemes to be Rich and Great; yet if their chief Care and Concern is taken up about these Things, it is certain they will be found *Fools*, when weighed in the Balance of true Wisdom.

He that is truly wise will consider that he has a Soul, as well as a Body, to take care of; a spiritual and immortal Substance which can never die; but when enlarged from that Prison in which it is now confined, must live for ever, either in Happiness or Misery. Shall we then be so foolish, as to confine our ambitious Pursuits within the narrow Limits of this World, without considering what will be the Condition of our Souls hereafter? Shall we labour and toil for *the Meat that perisheth*; and be cold and indifferent about the momentous Concerns of Eternity? Shall we spare no Pains in order to increase our temporal Estates, and to lay up *Goods for many Years*; when we know not, but *this Night our Souls may be required of us*? And if we have made no Provision

B

for

The Great Importance

for their everlasting Welfare, what will it avail us that we have been Rich and Great in this World?

Mat. xvi.
26.

The Fashion of this World passeth away, and all the Glory and Splendor of it will, in a little Time, have an End. How great then is the Folly, and how deplorable will the Condition of that Man be, who instead of seeking the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness in the first place, has consumed his Days in seeking after the Honours and Riches of this World, and has tired himself out in the Pursuit of those Things, which are of no Value in the Sight of God? Wretched Stupidity! What shall it profit a Man if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul? Time bears no Proportion to Eternity. The most exalted Pleasures of this Life, which at best are but of a short Continuance, can never compensate for the Loss of that Happiness, which God has prepared for them that love him. How miserably then will that Man be deceived, who places all his Hopes and Happiness in the poor and empty Satisfaction of a sensual Life? who looks no farther then the present Time,

Time, and lives as if he cared not what became of him hereafter, so he may but enjoy *the Pleasures of Sin for a Season*.

But some, perhaps, may ask, Where is the Man so abandoned to Folly and Madnefs, as to be content, for the Sake of a present short-lived Happinefs, to be miserable for ever hereafter? I wish indeed there were none fuch: But alas! there are too many that make this sad Choice. Not that any one choofes Evil for the fake of Evil, or prefers Mifery before Happinefs; (for a Defire of Happinefs is infeparable from our Nature) but in the Scripture-Account of Things, he is faid to choofe Deftitution, who walks in the broad Way that leads to it. For God has been pleased to *Deut.xxx. fet before us Life and Death, Bleffing and 19. Curfing*: Rewards on the one Hand, to encourage our Obedience; and Punifhments on the other, to deter us from Sin. And as he that obeys the Commandments of God, choofes *Life*, fo he that tranfgreffes them, choofes *Death*; *that* Death which God has threatened to the Sinner, even Death eternal. For the *Wages of Sin is Death*, and he that choofes the one (let

his Pretences be what they will) must be said to choose the other; because he knows (at least it is his own Fault, if he does not know) that *God will render to every* Rom. ii. *Man according to his Deeds: To them, who, by* 6, 7, 8, 9. *patient Continuance in Well-doing, seek for Glory and Honour and Immortality, eternal Life; but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the Truth, but obey Unrighteousness; Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguish, upon every Soul of Man that doth Evil.*

See then, what a wretched Piece of Folly the Sinner is guilty of, (how wise soever he may think himself, and how much soever he may despise the sober Part of Mankind) when he first enters upon a Life of Wickedness. For he is then evidencing to all the World, that, *Life and Death* being set before him, he has determined his Choice to the latter:—A Choice so absurd and unaccountable, that did not Experience convince us it is often made, we could hardly think it possible for a rational Creature to be so blind. *Blessed God! hast thou set before us Happiness and Misery, Joys unspeakable and fu*

of Glory on the one Hand, and Torments endless and intolerable on the other! hast thou given us the Light of Reason to guide us, and superadded that of thy Holy Spirit to illuminate and instruct us; hast thou implanted in our Natures a Dread of, and Aversion to, Pain and Misery, and an insatiable and never-ceasing Thirst after Happiness; and is it possible for us, after all this, to be so blind and senseless, such Enemies to our own Souls, and so regardless of their eternal Welfare, as to prefer the dark Ways of Sin and Misery before those blessed Paths that lead to the bright Regions of Bliss and Glory!—Alas! such wretched Fools are too many among us, who, notwithstanding all that thou hast done for us, will not hearken, nor be advised, but run headlong into the Ways of Sin and Destruction.

This indeed is a melancholy Consideration: and what shall we say to awaken Men out of this fatal Lethargy, and to inspire them with a just Sense of their Danger? what, but intreat them to consider, that unless they repent, they will certainly perish. For the Wrath of God is revealed against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of

- Acts xvii. 30, 31. *Men:—and though God winked at the Times of Ignorance; yet now he commandeth all Men every where to repent; because he hath appointed a Day, in which he will judge the World in Righteousness, by that Man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given Assurance unto all Men, in that he hath raised him from the Dead. A Day when the*
- Rev. vi. 16, 17. *Sinners will in vain call to the Mountains and Rocks to fall on them, and to bide them from the Face of him that sitteth on the Throne, and from the Wrath of the Lamb.—And when the great Day of his Wrath is come, who shall then be able to stand?—Who indeed shall be able to stand before the Face of an incensed God, and hear that dreadful Sentence pronounced against him, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels?—Ah! who can bear an Eternity of Horror and Despair? Who can dwell with implacable Fiends in everlasting Burnings?*
- If xxxiii. 14.

These are Things of infinite Moment and Concern, and are sufficient to shew us the great Necessity of denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and living righteously,

ously, soberly and godly, in this present World.
But because the weightiest Truths, when their Consequences are not immediately felt, are too apt to be disregarded; I shall enlarge a little upon the great Importance of a religious Life, by endeavouring to shew these *three* Things:

I. That there is no solid Happiness to be attained in this Life, but in the Practice of Religion.

II. That as Religion is the only Thing that can make us happy while we live, so there is nothing but a good Life can give us any comfortable Prospect, when we come to die.

III. That a conscientious Observance of the Duties of Religion, will not only make us live happily, and die comfortably; but, what is infinitely beyond all this, will most certainly be rewarded with eternal Happiness in the Life to come.

First then I shall endeavour to shew, *That there is no solid Happiness to be attained in this Life, but in the Practice of Religion.*

The Great Importance

It has been a great Artifice of the Devil, to possess the Minds of unthinking Men with an Opinion, that Religion is a sour, morose, ill-natured Thing; an Enemy to whatever is pleasant and chearful; and that whoever engages in the Practice of it, must from that Instant renounce all the Pleasures and Enjoyments of this Life. But as the *Devil is the Father of Lies*, it is no wonder that he sets every Thing before us in a false and deceitful Light: It was by these Means that he deceived our first unhappy Parents, and it is by the same Methods that he endeavours to betray their too credulous Posterity. He is continually representing *Evil as Good, and Good as Evil; putting Darkness for Light, and Light for Darkness*. He knows that there is such a Beauty and Comeliness in Religion, as no one can behold but with Love and Admiration; and therefore he endeavours to draw a Veil over its Lustre, and to raise in our Minds frightful Ideas concerning it: and too many, alas! are misled by such false and unjust Representations.

But

But would Men be persuaded once to make the Experiment; would they forsake the dangerous Paths of Sin, and walk in the Way that leads to everlasting Happiness; would they retire from the Noise and Tumult of a loose and disordered Life, and listen to the still Voice of Reason and Religion, they would quickly find how grossly they have been cheated, and wonder how it was possible they should so long have been deceived. They would soon discover, and from thence admire, *the Beauty of Holiness*, and be thoroughly convinced, that there is no Pleasure like that of a good Conscience; no real and solid Happiness, but what results from a Life of Virtue and Holiness. They would then bless the happy Change they had made, and would not part with their Interest in Heaven for the greatest Enjoyments this World could give them. All those empty Pleasures, which once captivated and ensnared them, would then appear mean and contemptible, and nothing would be thought of any real Value, but what sets them forward in the Way of Salvation.

The Great Importance

O happy Man (whosoever thou art) that hast made this noble Trial, and by a true and sincere Repentance art restored to the Favour and Love of God! thou hast *turned away thine Eyes from beholding Vanity*, and canst now look up with Confidence to God, and relish the Pleasures of a virtuous Life. How is thy Mind filled with Love, and Joy, and Admiration, when thou considerest, that by the Grace and Goodness of God thou art rescued out of the Jaws of the devouring Lion, and art delivered from Fear, and Shame, and Self-condemnation; the sure Attendants of a guilty Conscience!

We may have some Idea of the Happiness of such a Man, by considering what is the Pleasure of a redeemed Captive, when restored to his Country, his Liberty, and his Friends; or of a Mariner got safe to Shore after a Storm, wherein he was every Moment in Expectation of being swallowed up in the Deep. And yet it must be owned, the Comparison falls infinitely short: For what Slavery is so great as that of a Soul under the Bondage and Dominion of Sin? Or what are the most
terrible

terrible Dangers of the Sea, when compared with those to which the Sinner is continually exposed?

But have not some made Trial of Religion, and yet have found no Satisfaction therein? as may be concluded from their returning again to their former Course of Life. It is true, there are some Instances (and sad ones they are, God knows) of such, who *after they have been once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly Gift, and been made Partakers of the Holy Ghost, have yet fallen away, and betaken themselves again to a Life of Sin and Debauchery.* But has this been owing to a Dislike of Religion? By no means; but rather to a want of Care in not avoiding the Company which has formerly seduced them, or to a Forgetfulness, or at least a Neglect, of the Vows and Resolutions they have made; or, it may be, they have fallen under some violent Temptation, which they have not so vigorously resisted, as they might and ought to have done: Besides, Instances of this kind, I hope, are but rare. But then, on the other hand, how many are there, who have forsaken the

Company and Conversation of the Wicked; and having lamented the Folly and Madness of their past Lives, have, from being the Slaves of Sin and Satan, become the Servants of God? These will tell you, from their own Experience, that they have found more true Peace and Satisfaction in conquering one vicious Habit, than ever they met with in the most sensual Enjoyment; that all their past sinful Pleasures yield them now no other Fruits, than those bitter ones of Shame and Remorse: Whereas in Religion they find such a Spring of Comfort continually refreshing their Souls, as they would not part with for all this World can possibly give them. They taste such a Pleasure in the Service of God, as makes them with holy David *desire to dwell in the House of the Lord all the Days of their Lives, to behold the fair Beauty of the Lord, and to visit his Temple*; and like him esteem it better to be *a Door-keeper in the House of the Lord*, one of the meanest of God's Servants, *than to dwell in the Tents of Ungodliness*, amidst the Delights and Pleasures of a wicked and debauched World.

Indeed,

Psalms
xvii. 4.

Indeed, for a Man to reflect upon the Actions of a well-spent Life; to consider that he has made God his Friend, and secured an Interest in the Favour of Him, who is the eternal Source and Fountain of all Good; infinite in Mercy and Loving-kindness, as well as in Power; not only able, but willing and ready, to help and assist him in all Difficulties: a Being, to whom he may have Recourse under all Trials and Temptations, under the greatest Calamities and Troubles of Life; to whom he may lay open all his Wants and Infirmities, pour forth all his Sorrows and Afflictions, and may at all Times with Confidence look up, as being assured that he has a powerful Intercessor in Heaven, *Jesus Christ the Righteous, in whom we Col. i. 14. have Redemption through his Blood, even the Forgiveness of Sins; and who is able Heb. vii. to save them to the uttermost that come unto²⁵ God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make Intercession for them:* I say, for a Man to consider these Things; to think that he is answering the End of his Creation; that he is doing the Work for which he is sent into the World; that he is become a

Member

Member of Christ, a Child of God, and an Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven: How must such Thoughts cheer and refresh his Soul, and fill his Mind with Joy unspeakable, with a Pleasure and Satisfaction that is solid, substantial, and lasting; and in Comparison whereof all the vain and empty Enjoyments of this World are as nothing!

Psalms
xxxiv.
16.

But then, on the other hand, for a wicked Man to consider, that *the Face of the Lord is against them that do Evil*, and consequently that he is in the Number of those whom God hates and despises; that instead of *working out his Salvation with Fear and Trembling*, he is daily *heaping up to himself Wrath against the Day of Wrath*. And though (it may be) he is now *clothed with Purple and fine Linen*, and *fares sumptuously every Day*; though he may at present live in all the Gaiety and Splendor of the Pomp and Luxury of a great Fortune; yet there will come a Time (and, for aught he knows, it may not be many Moments off) when he shall be *stript of all his Pleasures and Enjoyments*, and *want even a Drop of Water to cool his Tongue*.

Tongue:—Surely, such Thoughts as these must strike the Sinner through with Horror and Amazement, and like *Belshazzar*, when he saw *the Hand-writing upon the Wall*, make him tremble, even in the midst of his greatest Mirth and Jollity.

And can a Man with such Thoughts about him (and these, or something like them, will be sure to haunt the Sinner) be said to be happy? Are the Stings of Conscience, the Terrors of an Almighty Judge, and the dreadful Expectations of God's Vengeance, consistent with a State of Happiness?—Alas! the Libertine may flatter himself as he pleases; and think to deceive others, by putting on an Air of Gaiety and Pleasantness; but, it is certain, his Mind can never be long at rest, while he carries about him a faithful Monitor, that will be continually upbraiding him for his Folly and Madness; representing before his Eyes the Dangers he is exposed to, and crossing him, as it were, in his Way, while he is in full Pursuit of his unlawful Pleasures.—And though he may perhaps be able sometimes to silence the Clamours of this troublesome Companion
by

by mere dint of Noise and Extravagance; yet when his Passions abate (as they will not always bear to be upon the Stretch) and the Man grows cool, he will find the Upbraidings of his Mind return upon him with the greater Violence: and the Shame and Anguish, the Horror and Confusion, that he will then feel, will infinitely overbalance all the Satisfaction he can meet with, in the Enjoyment of his sinful Pleasures.

I own, indeed, this is not the Case of every Sinner. A Man, by a long Course of Wickedness, may arrive at such an hardened State, as to be incapable of any sensible Impressions; his Soul may be seared, as it were, with an hot Iron, and be fallen into such a deep and fatal Lethargy, as nothing perhaps shall be able to awaken it, till it comes to feel the very Torments of the Damned. But no one, I believe, will think this to be a State of Happiness.

Besides, if we consider a wicked Man with respect to this World only, abstractedly from what will be his Portion hereafter, we shall find that there are many
and

; and great Evils to which he is exposed, besides the Torments of a guilty Conscience. Are not Pains and Aches, Rottenness and Diseases, the natural Effects of Lust and Intemperance? Poverty and broken Fortunes, of Pride and Prodigality? Does not Passion, and Anger, and Revenge, frequently expose Men to mischievous, and, many times, fatal Quarrels and Contentions? Robbery, Theft, and Murder, bring upon others a shameful and untimely End? How many Evils are there in the World, that are the immediate Effects of Men's Vices? *From whence* Jam. iv. 1, *come Wars and Fightings among you?* says St. James; *come they not hence, even of your Lusts that war in your Members?* And from the same fatal Source are derived many of those other Evils and Calamities that some Men labour under. If we trace them to their Original, we shall find them to be the natural Fruits of Men's Lusts and Passions, and to have proceeded from their covetous and ambitious Desires, and the Gratification of their unruly Lusts and Appetites. And, in truth, how can it be otherwise, if we consider, *That the Curse* Prov. iii. *of 33.*

Prov. xiii. 21. *of the Lord is in the House of the Wicked; and that Evil pursueth Sinners? How can any Thing but Misery attend him, who has God for his Enemy, and is cursed of him.*

Let us now consider, what is the Lot and Portion of good Men in this World; and whether the Practice of Virtue and Righteousness is not the most likely Way a Man can take to promote his present as well as future Happiness, and to make his Pilgrimage here on Earth a State of tolerable Ease and Comfort.

Ecclef. ii. 10. *Solomon had as much Experience of the Pleasure of the World as ever Man had and tried as many Ways to make himself happy as his Heart could well devise having kept nothing from his Eyes that they desired, nor withheld his Heart from any Joy; and yet, when he came to call up the Account, he found this to be the Sum of it, that all was Vanity and Vexation of Spirit. And therefore, when he is instructing his Son in the Ways of true Happiness, he advises him to get Wisdom and Understanding: for Wisdom says he, is the principal Thing; therefore*

get Wisdom; and with all thy getting, get Understanding. And, as an Encouragement to do so, he tells him, that *happy is the Man that findeth Wisdom, and the Man that getteth Understanding: For the Merchandize of it is better than the Merchandize of Silver, and the Gain thereof than fine Gold. She is more precious than Rubies, and all the Things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of Days is in her right Hand, and in her left Hand Riches and Honour. Her Ways are Ways of Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace.* This Wisdom and Understanding which he recommends, as a Treasure of so great Value, is not the Wisdom of this World; (for that is Foolishness with God. 1 Cor. iii. 19.) but it is the Wisdom that cometh from above, which will make us wise unto Salvation: the Wisdom of living in the Fear and Love of God, and in a strict Obedience to his Commandments. *The Fear of the Lord, says he, is the Beginning of Wisdom, and the Knowledge of the Holy is Understanding.* Or, as it is in Job, *Begin the Fear of the Lord, that is Wisdom;*

*dom; and to depart from Evil is Under-
standing.*

Here then is the Excellency of Religion, that it not only secures to us a Reversion of endless Happiness, but makes our Lives at present easy and delightful: the very Ways of Religion are pleasant, as well as the End. It is true, Vice has its present Pleasures as well as Virtue: but then there is this Difference between them; the Pleasures of Sin are weak, short-lived, and only varnished over; they begin and end almost in the same Moment, and can never be purchased but at the Expence of much succeeding Trouble, Shame, and Self-condemnation. Whereas those which result from a holy and religious Life, are substantial, sincere, steady and secure: they leave no Disgust upon the Mind, no Loathings and Dislike; are neither accompanied with Shame, nor followed with Remorse or Sadness; those bitter Allays to all sinful Gratifications. “W
“may talk of Pleasures and Enjoyment
“says a * *Great Prelate* of our Church

* *Archbb. of York, in his Volume of Sermons, p. 50*

“but no Man ever truly found them, till
“he became acquainted with God, and
“was made sensible of his Love, and
“Partaker of his heavenly Favours, and
“lived in an intire Friendship and Com-
“munion with him.” No certainly; Re-
ligion is the only Happiness of a rational
Creature, the only Thing that can give
us any true and real Satisfaction; all other
Pleasures are, at best, but short and
transitory: but in Religion we find a Delight
and Satisfaction, which is solid, substan-
tial, and lasting; a Delight that grows
and improves under Thought and Reflec-
tion.

“Whenever (*to use the Words of ano-
ther Excellent Person*) “an Action is good
“and virtuous, it is not only natural, but
“carries with it a Felicity flowing from,
“and essential to, the very Nature of it.
“Paternal, conjugal, filial Affection; are
“they not full of Delight? Justice,
“Friendship, Beneficence, all the Offices
“of Humanity, and the whole Train of
“Virtues; does not the Exercise of them
“administer the most sincere and lasting
“Joy? The Propensity there is in us to-
“wards

“wards them, and the Satisfaction there
 “is in the doing of them, does, in Dis-
 “positions not debauched, lead almost
 “irresistibly to the Practice of them: We
 “have, when we are about them, no
 “boding, misgiving Thoughts, no for-
 “bidding Whispers, no secret Reluc-
 “tancy: Comfort, Complacency of
 “Mind, and a gratulating Conscience,
 “always accompany such Actions.”

What a perpetual Source of Joy and
 Comfort is a good Conscience! It glad-
 dens the Heart, cheers and refreshes the
 Soul, and fills the Mind with a constant
 Serenity and Chearfulness, which is infi-
 nitely to be preferred before the noisy
 Mirth of Fools and Madmen. He that
 is possessed of this inestimable Jewel, has
 a Treasure greater than all the Riches of
 the *Indies*: a Treasure, which he always
 carries about with him, and which nei-
 ther the Malice of the Devil, nor the
 Wickedness of Men, can rob him of.
 And so long as he retains this Fund of
 Joy and Comfort (as he may always do,
 unless he is wretchedly wanting to him-
 self) he can never be truly miserable. For

as a good Conscience gives a Relish to all our outward Enjoyments, so it abates and takes off the Edge of the sharpest Afflictions; and not only enables a Man to bear up under present Evils, but fortifies him against the Dread and Apprehension of future ones. It arms a Man with Courage and Resolution, and gives him such a Firmness and Presence of Mind, as makes him able to endure the greatest Shock. Solomon observes, that *the Wick-* Prov.
ed flee, when no Man pursueth; but the xxviii. 1.
Righteous are bold as a Lion. And the Holy Psalmist tells us, that a good Man
shall not be afraid of any evil Tidings: Ps. cxii. 7.
for his Heart standeth fast, and believeth in the Lord. The Lord, says he, *is my* Psalm
Light and my Salvation; whom then shall xxvii. 1.
I fear? The Lord is the Strength of my
Life; of whom shall I be afraid? Yea, Ps. xxiii.
though I walk through the Valley of the
shadow of Death, I will fear no Evil;
for thou art with me, thy Rod and thy
Staff comfort me. What indeed should he fear, whose Soul is anchored upon the Rock of Ages; *Who has the God of* Ps. cxlvi.
Jacob for his Help; whose Hope is in the 4.

Lord his God? He knows that he is in the Hands of a most gracious and merciful Father, and is fully persuaded that *all Things shall work together for Good to them that love him*: He is assured, that

Pf. xxxiii. the Eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him; upon them that hope in his Mercy to deliver their Soul from Death, and to keep them alive in Famine. And there-
17, 18.

fore he can rejoice in God, even in the midst of Trouble and Affliction, when he considers, that as his Afflictions come from the Hands of a good and gracious
2 Cor. iv. God, who does not willingly afflict the Children of Men; so he knows that as the Time is short, they can be of no long Continuance, and that, if he makes a right Use of them, they will work for him far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory.

See then the Folly and Madness of those that take not God for their Strength but trust to the Multitude of their Riches and strengthen themselves in their Wickedness, and think by these Means to be fortified against the Evils of this Life!—
Pf. lii. 8. Alas! There are numberless Calamities from

from which Wealth and Power can never shelter us: and therefore when a Man lets go his Trust in God, and takes Sanctuary in the Strength of his Wickedness, he will find himself miserably mistaken, when the Day of Adversity comes upon him. The Weight of Sin superadded to that of temporal Evils, is a Burthen greater than any one is able to bear. 'Tis certain, whatever the great Ones of this World may think, there is nothing can alleviate the Force of Worldly Troubles, but a good Life. It is *That*, and *That* only, which is a sufficient Counterpoise to balance the Weight of any great Affliction. Nothing else is sufficient to support a Man in *the Evil Days of his Pilgrimage*, and to sustain his Spirit under the greater Calamities of this Life. All other Experiments, how promising soever, will be found vain and ineffectual. The Consciousness of having in some Measure lived holily and unblameably, will make a Man look up with a cheerful Assurance to the great Supporter of his Being; enable him to see through the darkest Clouds of Sorrow and Affliction,

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tion, and to behold with an Eye of Faith that heavenly Country to which he is travelling, and where he hopes shortly to arrive. And this, though it will not wholly remove the Afflictions which God is sometimes pleased, for wise and good Ends, to send upon some Men in this Life, nor make us insensible of the Trouble that attends them; yet it will mightily lessen and enervate their Force, and enable us, with some Degree of Courage and Chearfulness, to bear up under them. For how strong a Consolation must it be for a good Man, under bodily Grief and Pains, to contemplate a State where there shall be *no more Sorrow, no more Pain, and where all Tears shall be wiped for ever from his Eyes!* Or, if he is under the Pressure of Want and Necessity, how must it support and relieve his sinking Spirits to consider, that

Heb. xiii.
5.

he has a Father in Heaven, who *will never leave him, nor forsake him*, however he may at present think fit to deprive him of outward Comforts; and that there is no Person in the World so great, so prosperous, or so happy, but that (having a little Patience) he himself shall be more so!

The

The Sum of what I have said upon this Head, is so elegantly expressed by the Author of a late Essay upon the Omnipresence of God, that, I believe, I shall leave this Reflection more strongly upon my Reader's Mind, if I give him the Words of that unknown, but excellent, Person. ' How happy (*says he, speaking of the Intercourse there is betwixt God and the Souls of good Men*), ' how happy is an ' intellectual Being, who, by Prayer and ' Meditation, by Virtue and good Works, ' opens this Communication between ' God and his own Soul! Though the ' whole Creation frowns upon him, and ' all Nature looks black about him, he ' has his Light and Support within him, ' that are able to cheer his Mind, and ' bear him up in the midst of all those ' Horrors which encompass him. He ' knows that his Helper is at Hand, and ' is always nearer to him than any thing ' else can be, which is capable of annoy- ' ing or terrifying him. In the midst ' of Calumny or Contempt, he attends to ' that Being, who whispers better Things ' within his Soul, and whom he looks ' upon

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‘ upon as his Defender, his Glory, and
 ‘ the *Lifter-up of his Head*. In his
 ‘ deepest Solitude and Retirement, he
 ‘ knows that he is in Company with the
 ‘ greatest of Beings; and perceives with-
 ‘ in himself such real Sensations of his
 ‘ Presence, as are more delightful than any
 ‘ thing that can be met with in the Con-
 ‘ versation of his *Creatures*. Even in
 ‘ the Hour of Death, he considers the
 ‘ Pains of his Dissolution to be nothing
 ‘ else but the breaking down of that
 ‘ Partition, which stands betwixt his Soul
 ‘ and the Sight of that Being, who is
 ‘ always present with him, and is about
 ‘ to manifest itself to him in Fulness of
 ‘ Joy.

‘ If we would be thus happy, (*to go*
 ‘ *on with the Words of this pious Author,*)
 ‘ and thus sensible of our Maker’s Pre-
 ‘ sence, from the secret Effects of his
 ‘ Mercy and Goodness, we must keep
 ‘ such a Watch over all our Thoughts,
 ‘ that, in the Language of the Scripture,
 ‘ *his Soul may have Pleasure in us*. We
 ‘ must take Care not to grieve his Holy
 ‘ Spirit, but endeavour to make the Me-

‘ citations of our Hearts always accept-
 ‘ able in his Sight, that he may delight
 ‘ thus to reside and dwell in us. The
 ‘ Light of Nature could direct *Seneca* to
 ‘ this Doctrine, in a very remarkable Pas-
 ‘ sage among his Epistles; *sacer inest in*
 ‘ *nobis Spiritus, bonorum malorumque Cu-*
 ‘ *stos & Observator; & quemadmodum nos*
 ‘ *illum tractamus, ita & ille nos.* There
 ‘ is a Holy Spirit residing in us, who
 ‘ watches and observes both good and
 ‘ evil Men, and will treat us after the
 ‘ same Manner that we treat him. But
 ‘ I shall conclude, *says he*, this Discourse
 ‘ with those more emphatical Words in
 ‘ Divine Revelation; *if any Man love*
 ‘ *me, he will keep my Word, and my Father*
 ‘ *will love him, and we will come unto him,*
 ‘ *and make our Abode with him.*’

I have hitherto considered a good
 Life, *First*, as it fills our Minds with
 Joy, and Peace, and Comfort, and de-
 livers us from those uneasy Reflections,
 which haunt and torment the Sinner:
 And, *Secondly*, as it is a Means to secure
 us from those Evils, which are the im-
 mediate Effects of Sin, and to support

us under such Afflictions, as it pleases God, many Times, to send upon good Men in this World. I shall now consider it with respect to some other Advantages it has above that of a wicked Course of Actions: and I hope it will fully appear, that there is nothing so likely to secure a Man's Happiness in this World, as a strict Observance of the Precepts and Duties of Religion.

St *Peter* lays it down as an undoubted Truth, that whosoever desires to live happily, must live holily. *He that will love Life*, says he, *and see good Days, let him refrain his Tongue from Evil, and his Lips, that they speak no Guile; let him eschew Evil, and do Good.* And the Reason that temporal Prosperity is so likely to be the Lot and Proportion of the Religious Man, is, because *the Eyes of the Lord are over the Righteous, and his Ears are open unto their Prayers; but the Face of the Lord is against them that do Evil.* It is very evident, from the whole Tenor of the Scriptures, that the Providence of God does very much interest itself in the Care and Support of good Men in this World. O

taste

taste and see, says the holy Psalmist, how gracious the Load is: Blessed is the Man, that trusteth in him. O fear ye the Lord, ye that are his Saints: for they that fear him, lack nothing. The Lions do lack and suffer Hunger; but they who seek the Lord, shall want no manner of Thing that is good. How remarkable are the Words of the wise Son of Sirach to this Purpose! Look at the Generations of old, says he; Did ever any trust in the Lord, and was confounded? or did any abide in his Fear, and was forsaken? or whom did he ever despise, that called upon him? Add to this that Observation of holy David; I have been young, and now am old, and yet saw I never the Righteous forsaken, nor his Seed begging their Bread. As on the contrary, I have seen, says he, the Ungodly in great Power, and flourishing like a green Bay-tree: I went by, and lo! he was gone; I sought him, but his Place could no where be found. The Contemplation of God's watchful Providence over good Men, made the devout Psalmist resolve and say, I will always give Thanks unto the Lord: his Praise shall ever be in my Mouth.

It is certain, that God is a Being of infinite Purity and Holiness: and as he must therefore hate Iniquity, with the utmost Hatred; so there is no doubt, but a serious and conscientious Observation of the Duties of Religion, will recommend a Man to his Favour and Protection. He that *feeds the Fowls of the Air, and clothes the Grass of the Field, and is of a Nature so diffusively bountiful, as to make his Sun to rise on the Evil, as well as on the Good, and sends his Rain both on the Just and Unjust,* will undoubtedly in a more peculiar manner bless the Labours of an honest and industrious Man, and provide for those that fear him, and keep his Commandments. I would not be understood to say, that never any wicked Man has prospered, nor any good Man been unsuccessful in this World: For it pleases God many Times, for wise and good Ends, to suffer the Righteous to fall into great Perplexities and Distresses. However, since
 Ps. v. 12. *the Scriptures assure us, that the Lord will bless the Righteous, and compass him*
 Ps. cxii. 3. *with Favour as with a Shield; that Wealth and*

and Riches shall be in the House of him that feareth the Lord, and delighteth in his Commandments; that Blessings shall be upon his Head; that the House of the Righteous shall stand, and the Tabernacle of the Upright shall flourish; that it shall be well with them that fear God; and in short, ^{Ps. cxii 1.} ^{Prov. x. 6.} ^{xii. 7.} ^{xiv. 11.} ^{Eccles. viii 12.} ^{1 Tim. 8. iv.} *that, Godliness has the Promise of the Life that now is, as well as of that which is to come; I think we may certainly conclude, That a strict Observance of the Duties of the Christian Religion, is the most likely Way a Man can take to thrive and prosper in the World, and to make his Life comfortable and happy.*

And of this Truth we may be convinced, not only from the Testimony of Scripture, but from the Reason and Nature of Things. For, let any one consider and tell me, whether he that is just and true in all his Dealings, honest and sincere in all his Professions, and faithful to his Word and Promises; that is diligent and industrious in his Calling; makes it his constant Rule to do to all Men as he would they should do to him; and is so far from endeavouring to

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over-reach and defraud his Neighbour, that he chooses rather to forego the greatest Gain, than purchase it at the Expence of the least Injustice: I say, let any one tell me, whether it is not much more probable, that such an one should enlarge his Fortune in the World, than he that acts the very Reverse of all this; that practises all the Arts of Cheating and Lying, of Over-reaching and Circumvention, and stoops to every Thing, how base and dishonest soever, which he thinks will turn to his present Profit; that considers not so much, how honest and upright his Actions are, as how profitable; and cares not what his Neighbour suffers by his Injustice, so he himself does but get by it? Such an one, when he comes to be known, (as he will not be able long to conceal himself) will certainly lose his Credit and Reputation; he will become hated and despised, and every one will be afraid to have any Dealings with him: On the other hand, the honest and upright Man (besides the Blessing of God, which he cannot fail of) will be sure to meet with
the

the Love and Esteem of all that know him: he will have few, if any, Enemies; but many Friends, and those some of the wisest and best of Men, who will be always ready to help and assist him, and be glad of every Opportunity of promoting his Interest and Happiness.

2. Another great Blessing of Life, and what gives a Relish to all other Enjoyments, is *Health*: And who is more likely to obtain this Blessing, than the Religious Man? For will not Temperance, Sobriety and Virtue, (Duties which he practises) conduce more to a sound and vigorous Constitution of Body, than Surfeiting and Drunkenness, Lust and Intemperance; the mischievous Effects of which are too visible to be denied? *Who hath Woe?* Prov. xxiii said Solomon, *who hath Sorrow? who hath Contentions? who hath Babbling? who hath Wounds without Cause? who hath Redness of Eyes? They that tarry long at the Wine, they that go to seek mixed Wine.* What Sickness and Diseases have some brought upon themselves, merely by their Excesses and Debaucheries! Diseases, which have not terminated with their own Lives, but
C 6 have

have been entailed upon their unhappy Posterity! And how can it be otherwise, unless it should please God to change the Nature of Things? For if Men will run into those Excesses, which inflame and corrupt their Blood, it is no Wonder if a Fever or Dropsy, or some more fatal Distemper, proceed from such Disorders: and when a vicious or debauched Parent has brought Rottenness into his own Bones, though the Children may be free from the Vices of their Father, yet they frequently feel the mischievous Effects of his Transgressions all their Lives.

3. Again, *a chearful and contented Mind* is another great Blessing of Life: for without it nothing in this World can make us happy. And by what means shall a Man obtain this, but by the Practice of Religion? *That* will teach him to resign his Will to God, to submit to all the Dispensations of his Providence, and to be patient and easy, chearful and satisfied, under every Disappointment and Trouble he meets with; as knowing that God is the sovereign Disposer of all Things; a Being of infinite Goodness, Kindness and Love; that

that does not willingly afflict the Children of Men, but makes every Thing work together for good to them that love him. And how quiet, easy and contented must such a Man be under all Events! He has learned with St. Paul, how to abound, and how to want; and as he is not puffed up with the one, so neither is he cast down, when it pleases God to send the other, but goes through the World with a chearful, even, and contented Mind, undisturbed by that Inquietude, Impatience, and Discontent, from which a proud, envious and ambitious Man is seldom, if ever, free.

4. Peace is another great Blessing, highly conducive to the Happiness of Life: and to this the religious Man has the justest Claim. He considers, that if God ^{1 John iv.} so loved us, as to send his Son to be the Propitiation ^{10, 11.} for our Sins, we ought also to love one another: and therefore he is an Enemy to no Man, but kind and good-natured, and obliging to all; and if any one is so unreasonable as to reward him Evil for Good, (as the Psalmist complains some had done to himself) yet, in Imitation of his Blessed Saviour, (whose Example he

- Matt. v. he continually sets before him) *he does* P
 44. *good to them that hate him, and prays for* nes
them that despitefully use him and persecute I
 1 Pet. ii. *him. When he is reviled, he reviles not* of
 23. *again; when he suffers, he threatens not* ove
but committeth himself to him that judgeth trou
righteously. He resolves, as St. Paul ad Wat
 Eph. iv. *vices, to put away all Bitterness, and* Stra
 31. *Wrath, and Anger, and Clamour, and Evil* Fru
speaking, with all Malice; and endeavouring ying
 Jam. iii. *vours to attain that Wisdom which is* every
 17. *from above, which is first pure, then* restle
peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreat with
ed, full of Mercy and good Fruits. And which
this Principle of Love, and Charity, ber,
and Good Will to Mankind, as it renders those
the Mind quiet and easy, calm and com Conse
posed; so it makes a Man not only hap bent
py himself, but a Blessing and Comfort with
all about him: and consequently attracts the
the Love, and Esteem, and Admiration th
of all those that see and feel the kind and
benign Influences of so divine a Temper une!
 Ps. cxix. *Great Peace, says the Psalmist, have* al o
 165. *which love thy Law, and nothing shall* ale o
send them. And the Prophet assures d fr
 Is. xxxiii. *That the Work of Righteousness shall* is no
 17. *Peace*

Peace, and the Effect of Righteousness, Quietness and Assurance for ever.

But now, on the other Hand, the Life of an angry and revengeful Man is all over Storm and Tempest: he is *like a* II. lvii. 20. *troubled Sea, when it cannot rest, whose Waters cast up Mire and Dirt.* He is a Stranger to Peace, and all the blessed Fruits and Effects of it: for where *En-* Jam. iii. *vying and Strife is, there is Confusion and* ^{16.} *every evil Work.* His Mind is continually restless and uneasy, agitated to and fro with the violent Force of unruly Passions, which lead him on from one Evil to another, and hurry him many times into those that are of a very mischievous Consequence. What Misery and Torment must a Man feel, who is possessed with a Spirit so directly contrary to that of the Gospel! How little can he taste the true Happiness of Life, whose Mind is always disordered and out of Tune! He may perhaps *possess* a great deal of the World, but can *enjoy* very little of it: For what Comfort can he find from any Thing in this World, who has no Peace in his own Mind; who is
at

at Enmity with himself, and with almost every one else, and is capable of being put out of Humour by every trifling, cross Accident? Is it possible for a Man of such a Temper to be happy, even in the midst of the greatest Prosperity? No certainly; it is the meek-spirited, that our Saviour hath pronounced *Blessed*: They shall inherit the Earth, and be refreshed, as the Psalmist speaks, in the Multitude of Peace, and shall find a real Comfort in whatever they possess; which (though it should happen to be but little) yet being enjoyed with Peace and Quiet, and with a contented Mind, will undoubtedly yield them much greater and truer Satisfaction, than a Man of a contrary Disposition can reap from large Possessions and ample Revenues.

5. I shall mention but one Advantage more which a good Man has above a wicked one, as to this World; and that is in respect of *dutiful and obedient Children*: which is allowed by all to be a great Blessing in itself, and is what, I think, the former has much more Reason to expect and hope for, than the latter.

if it pleases God to bless a good Man with Children, he begins very early to instil into their tender Minds the Principles of Virtue and Religion; he teaches them *to remember their Creator in the Days of their Youth*, and brings them up in the Fear and Admonition of the Lord. He sets before them the Example of a holy and religious Life; and endeavours to wean them from the Pride and Vanity of the World, and from those hurtful Lusts and Passions, which tend only to make them miserable both here and hereafter. He instructs them in that Knowledge which is Useful and Profitable, which will give them a right Understanding of themselves and of their Duty, and make them wise unto Salvation: and when the Grace of God co-operates with these Endeavours, (as it will not fail to do) what comfortable Hopes may not such a Parent entertain of reaping the happy Fruits of all his Labours? Instead of looking upon his Children with Grief and Trouble, and having his grey Hairs, by their means, brought down with Sorrow to the Grave; how much rather
may

may he expect to behold them with Pleasure and Delight, when he sees them as so many *Olive-Branches round about his Table*, fruitful in every good Work, and increasing in the Knowledge and Love of God?

There is no one, I believe, but will allow, that this is the most likely Way a Man can take to be happy in his Children: and though it should not prove effectual, (for Success is not in our own Power) yet of this he may be assured, that his pious and sincere Endeavours to train up his Children in a sober, honest and religious Course of Life, will certainly recommend him to the Favour and Love of God; as is manifest from

Gen. xviii. the great Regard God expressed for Abraham on this very Account. And the Lord said, shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty Nation, and all the Nations of the Earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his Children and his Household after him, and they shall keep the Way of the Lord, to do Justice and Judgment.

ment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

This is a great Encouragement to Parents, to be very careful in the Education of their Children: they are making Provision for their own Happiness, at the same time that they are endeavouring to secure that of their Children. They are laying up in Store a good Foundation of Comfort against the Day of Trouble, if it should ever come upon them; I mean, if it should please God, that they should live to see their Children wicked and miserable, notwithstanding all the Endeavours they have used to make them otherwise. They will then have the Comfort to consider, that they are clear from the Guilt of their Children's Sins: and will be free from those bitter Reflections that a wicked Man must make, who sees his Children ruined and undone by those Vices and Follies, which his Example hath taught them, or his Carelessness and Neglect suffered them to fall into. Bitter Reflections, I say, they must undoubtedly be, that such a Parent will make, when he considers, that he has his Children's

Ezek. iii.
18.

Children's Sins as well as his own to account for, and applies to himself (as he justly may) those dreadful Words, which God spake to the Prophet Ezekiel: *When I say unto the Wicked thou shalt surely die, and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the Wicked from his wicked Way, to save his Life; the same wicked Man shall die in his Iniquity; but his Blood will I require at thy Hands.* O terrible Words of most just Judgment! How dreadful must they sound in the Ear of a wicked Parent, whose Children have perished through his Fault!

I have now considered some of those Duties to which Religion obliges us, and endeavoured to shew how conducive they are to our temporal Happiness: by which, I hope, it sufficiently appears, how much good Men have the Advantage of the Wicked even as to this World. And here I cannot but take notice of the wonderful Love of God to Mankind, in that, to encourage our Obedience to his Laws, he has annexed a present as well as future Reward to a good Life, and has so interwoven our Duty and Happiness;

Happiness together, that while we are discharging our Obligations to the one, we are at the same time making Provision for the other.

How much then do they derogate from the Honour of God, who represent Religion as an unprofitable and unpleasant Task! when it is plain to any Man, that considers Things rightly, and is not under the Prejudice of his Lusts and Passions, that the great Design of Religion is to make us happy here, as well as hereafter; that all it's Rules and Precepts are most admirably suited to this End: and, would Men be persuaded to live in the Practice of them, we should find this World a kind of Heaven upon Earth!

Had the Practice of our Duty been ever so irksome and uneasy, and had nothing but Trouble and Misery been the Lot of good Men in this World; yet when we consider, that this Life will shortly have an End, and that there is an *eternal Weight of Glory* reserved in Heaven for those that truly love and serve God; what wise Man would not prefer the

the rugged Paths of Virtue and Religion, which he knows will shortly lead him into an Eternity of Bliss and Happiness, before the Ways of Sin and Wickedness, (how pleasant soever he might find them) where he is in Danger every Moment of falling into the Pit of Destruction, and which, he is sure, will in a little Time bring him into a Place of endless Misery and Torment.

But since there is nothing in Religion, but what tends to make our Lives easy, cheerful and contented; nothing but what is suitable to our Natures, and agreeable to the Dictates of right Reason; nothing but what will ennoble our Minds, enlarge our Understandings, and inspire us with a generous Principle of universal Love, and Charity and Good-will to Mankind; in short, since *the Commands of God are not grievous, but his Yoke is easy, and his Burden then light*; it manifestly follows, that, a good Life is the highest Wisdom, so a wicked one is the Extremity of Folly and Madness.

A P R A Y E R.

✠ ✠ Most gracious God, who, out
O ✠ of thy great Love and tender
✠ ✠ Regard for Mankind, hast set
before us Life and Death,
Blessing and Cursing; and hast endued
us with a Freedom of Will, and a Li-
berty to choose the one, and avoid the
other; and to encourage us to make a
right Choice, hast annexed a present
as well as future Reward to our Obedi-
ence to thy Laws, and made the Ways
of Religion Ways of Pleasantness, and
its Paths to be Peace: O give me
Wisdom and Understanding, that I may
not be carried away by the deceitful Plea-
sures of this World, but may see and
know and choose the Things which make
for my Peace, and wherein my true and
Happiness does consist.

Convince me more and more, that Sin
the greatest of all Evils; that Guilt
and Misery are always inseparable; and
that there is no solid and substantial Hap-
piness

pineness to be attained in this Life, but what results from the Testimony of a good Conscience, and the Hopes of thy Favour and Acceptance; and grant that these momentous Truths may be so deeply impressed upon my Mind, that I may make it the sincere Endeavour of my whole Life to please and obey Thee, who art my sovereign Good and Happiness; the only sure Foundation of all my Hopes both here and hereafter; and in Comparison of whose Favour, all the Honours, Riches and Enjoyments of this World are as nothing.

Deliver me, I beseech Thee, from the Shame and Anguish, the Horror and Confusion of a Guilty Conscience; and give me that Comfort and Complacency of Mind, which arises from the Consciousness of having been faithful in thy Service, and obedient to thy Will. And since thou hast been graciously pleased to make thy Service the most perfect Freedom, and the Practice of our Duty so conducive to our present as well as future Well-being; O! make me steadfast and immoveable in the Ways of thy Law.

Laws, and in the Works of thy Commandments; that having faithfully served Thee in this Life, I may at last be found meet to be a Partaker of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light, through the sole Merits and Intercession of our Eternal Advocate and Mediator, Jesus Christ. Amen.





THE
GREAT IMPORTANCE
OF A
RELIGIOUS LIFE.



CHAP. II.

IN the foregoing Chapter I
I have endeavoured to shew,
that Religion is the only so-
lid Foundation of Happiness
in this World; the only Thing that can
make us pass the Time of our Pilgrimage
here on Earth, with any tolerable Ease and
Comfort. I shall now proceed, in the next
Place, to consider the great Advantage of
a good Life, from the comfortable Pro-
spect it gives us when we come to die.

And

And this is an Advantage peculiar to Virtue and Religion, and to which a Life of Sin and Wickedness never pretended. The most which That promises its Votaries, is to regale their Senses for a little while: it gives them no Hopes beyond the Grave, nor aims at any Thing farther than a short-lived Happiness. *When a wicked* Prov. xi. *Man dieth, his Expectation shall perish.* 7. *For what is the Hope of the Hypocrite,* Job xxvii. *though he hath gained all that this World* 8. can give him, *when God taketh away his Soul?* All his Enjoyments are then at an End, and those Schemes upon which he has built his Happiness, will vanish and come to nothing. But with a good Man it is far otherwise. He looks beyond this present Life, and beholds with an Eye of Faith the heavenly *Jerusalem*, the *City of the living God*: that Place of endless Bliss and Happiness, which God has prepared for them that love him. In the Hopes and Expectation of this Happiness, he considers himself *as a Pilgrim and Stranger upon Earth*, and is daily endeavouring, through the Assistance of God's Holy Spirit, by a Life of Virtue and

Righteousness, to become meet to be a Partaker of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.

It must indeed be owned, that Death is the great King of Terrors; that the Dissolution of Soul and Body, and the Thoughts of becoming a Prey to the devouring Worms, carries in it something very shocking to human Nature: Yet to a good Man, Death appears in a quite different View. He considers, that to leave this World is only to quit a Place of Trouble and Vexation, of Vanity and Emptiness: it is to leave a *barren and dry Wilderness, where no Water is*, for the delightful Regions of Bliss and Happiness, where are Rivers of Pleasure, and a never-ceasing Spring of endless Comfort, which will satisfy the most longing Desires of the Soul. He considers, that *though this earthly Tabernacle is dissolved, yet he has a Building of God, a House not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens*: And is assured with Job, *that his Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter Day upon the Earth: and though this Body be destroy'd, yet in his Flesh shall he see God, whom he shall see for himself,*

Job xix.
25, 26 27.

self, and his Eyes shall behold, and not another's.

This is what Religion promises to them, who, by patient Continuance in well-doing, seek for Glory and Honour and Immortality. It is the Hopes and Expectations of this unspeakable Happiness that fortify the Mind of a good Christian, and give him a Courage and Resolution, which even Death itself shall not be able to shake.

It was this that gave holy David such a firmness of Mind as made him say, *Though I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no Evil; for thou art with me, thy Rod, and thy Staff comfort me.* He had made God his Portion, his Hope and his Trust: *The Lord, says he, is my stony Rock, and my Defence, my Saviour, my God, and my Might, in whom I will trust, my Buckler, the Horn also of my Salvation.* And though we find him sometimes complaining, *that the Sorrows of Death had compassed him, and the Overflowings of Ungodliness made him afraid; that the Pains of Hell came about him, and the Snares of Death overtook him;*

Psalm

xxvii. 15.

yet the great Confidence he had in the Goodness and Love of God, and the firm Belief of a better Life after this, overcame all his Fears. *I had fainted, says he, but that I verily believe to see the Goodness of the Lord in the Land of the Living.*

Religion has been the Support of good Men in all Ages. It is certain, whoever leans upon any thing else, will find that he trusts to a broken Reed, which will bend under him. There is nothing (as I have observed in the former Chapter) but the Testimony of a good Conscience, and the Hopes of the Favour and Love of God, that is able to bear a Man up under the Weight and Pressure of any great Calamity; much less will any thing else be sufficient at the Hour of Death. For then we shall be stript of all the Pleasures and Enjoyments of this World, of all those things in which we are now apt to place so great a Confidence: And unless we are fortified *with the Shield of Faith, and the Breast-plate of Righteousness*; unless we have *put on the Lord Jesus*, and are clothed with the Robes of his Righteousness,

teousness, we shall be left naked and defenceless, to encounter Death with all its Terrors. The Sinner, how much so ever he may now *trust, in the Multitude of his Riches, and strengthen himself in his Wickedness*, must then give up all his Dependencies, and descend into the Regions of Darkness without Hope, and (what is yet more terrible) with dreadful Expectations. 'Of what infinite Moment is it then to us all, so to live, that *when the Time appointed for our great Change shall come*, we may meet Death without Fear and Astonishment; and with an humble Confidence, may look up to God in an assured Hope of his Mercy in Christ Jesus!

A good Life is the sure Pledge of a happy Death. As it fills our Minds with Joy and Satisfaction while we live, far surpassing all the Pleasures of sensual Enjoyments; so, when we come to die, it gives us that *Peace of God which passeth all Understanding*. When a Man in his last Hour can look back upon a Life well spent, and can say with King Hezekiah, *Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in Truth* Isaiah xxxviii. 3.

Psalm

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and with a perfect Heart, and have done that which is good in thy Sight; what an unspeakable Satisfaction must it be to him! How mild and calm will Death then appear, and with how little Concern will he receive its Summons! With what Chearfulness will he then take leave of this World, and all that was dear to him in it; and how contentedly will he quit his earthly Tabernacle, when he considers, that he is to exchange it for a *Building of God, a House not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens!* I say, what an unspeakable Comfort must it be to a dying Man, when he is entering into the *Valley of the Shadow of Death*, to have before him a bright Prospect of Life and Glory; to find the Light of God's Countenance shining upon his Mind, and the Comforts of his Holy Spirit chearing and refreshing his Soul; to be able to look up to God with a filial Confidence, and with a *Hope full of Glory and Immortality*, to resign his Soul into the Hands of his Maker; not doubting, but his heavenly Father, whom he has faithfully served in this World, will take Care of him, and reward him in the next; and

and that the same infinite Power and Goodness, that has carried him safe through this *Vale of Tears and Misery*, will conduct him in his Passage to a blessed Eternity! O! how far more happy must the Death of such an one be, than the most envy'd State of the greatest Mortal! Who would not wish *to die the Death of the Righteous, and that his last End may be like his?* Especially,

If we consider, in the next Place, the miserable Condition of a wicked Man, when Death approaches. But how shall I describe the Agonies and Convulsions of Mind, that a despairing Sinner labours under in his last Hour! Who can express the thousandth Part of the Anguish and Torment that He feels, who is under the Terrors of Death and Damnation! *The Prov. Spirit of a Man, says Solomon, will sustain his Infirmary; but a wounded Spirit who can bear?* The most exquisite Pains and Torments of the Body, are nothing comparable to what a dying Sinner feels, from the Stings of his guilty Conscience. With what Shame and Confusion does he then look back upon the Actions of his

past Life? How does he tremble, and stand confounded at the Sight of those Sins, which were once the darling Objects of his guilty Desires; and what an horrible Dread overwhelms his Mind, when he considers, that he is entering upon that unchangeable State, from which he knows there is no Redemption; that he is going to give an Account of a Life, which he cannot think upon without Horror and Amazement, and for which he is justly afraid he shall in a few Moments be consigned to endless Misery and Torments! How does he condemn himself, when he considers that he has spent that Time insignificantly and wickedly, which was given him for noble and excellent Purposes; that he has neglected the great and important Work of his Salvation, and been deaf to all the Calls and Invitations of God's holy Spirit; that instead of laying up in Store a good Foundation of Hope and Comfort against the Day of Trouble, which is now come upon him, he has heaped up to himself a dreadful Load of Guilt, which is ready to sink him with its intolerable Weight!

Q. wretched

O wretched Man, what wouldest thou give (were it in thy Power) to recall those precious Moments, which thou has lavished away in Sin and Vanity! How dost thou wish, that thou *hadst known* in time the *Things that belong to thy Peace!* But alas! *they are now hid from thine Eyes*, and nothing is left but Darkneſs and Deſpair.

But let us ſuppoſe the Life of a dying Perſon not to have been ſo flagrant and vicious, as to fill his Mind with ſuch black and deſpairing Thoughts: Yet, if upon the Review of it in his laſt Hour, he finds in it ſuch a Mixture of Good and Evil, that he is in great Doubts and Perplexities concerning his eternal Welfare, how ſad and diſconſolate muſt his Condition even then be! And what a dreadful Concern will he labour under, when he conſiders that he is leaving this World, and going he knows not whither; that he is juſt launching out into the boundleſs Ocean of Eternity, and knows not but the Moment he does ſo, he may ſink into the terrible Abyſs of endleſs Miſery and Torment? It is, without all Queſti-

on, a most uncomfortable Thing to be doubtful of a Matter, of which it so nearly concerns us to have some reasonable Assurance.

Deut.

xxxii. 29.

Pf. xxxvii.

38.

O! that Men would be persuaded seriously to think on these things; that they would *be wise and consider their latter End*; and as the *Psalmist* advises, would *keep Innocency, and take heed to the Thing that is right; for that, and that only, shall bring a Man Peace at the last.* And who is there so stupid, that would not wish for so invaluable a Blessing? What wise Man would not rather submit to the worst that could befall him here in a *short Life*, than run the least Risque of going out of this World under the Terrors of a guilty Conscience? It is (whatever those, who are carried away by their Lusts and Passions, may think to the contrary,) it is the utmost Wisdom of Man to prepare for his latter End, by conducting himself according to the Will of his great Creator: For it is certain, however some may flatter themselves, there is no leaving this World, with any tolerable Composure, unless our Lives have been such, as through the tender

der

der Mercies of God, and the Merits of Christ Jesus, we may reasonably hope that we are in the number of those, whom our great Judge shall at the last Day pronounce *Blessed*. But this is only the Lot and Portion of the Righteous; for how can any one, whose Life has been a direct Contradiction to the Will of God, entertain any reasonable Hopes of his Favour? For though he should, perhaps, when he sees Death approaching, lament and bewail the Folly of his past Life, and *with strong Crying and Tears* resolve upon a new Course of Life, if it should please God to spare him; yet since the Gospel hath no where assured us, that God will accept of a Death-bed Repentance, or be reconciled to a Sinner, who, after he hath lived a wicked and careless Life, and been deaf to all the Calls and Invitations of the Holy Spirit, the Threatnings of the Gospel, and the Checks of his own Conscience, shall at the last, when he is able to gratify his Lusts no longer, and begins to fear the sad Consequence of his Sins, cry out for Mercy, and wish that he had been wise in Time; I say, since God has

no

no where revealed, that he will accept of any Repentance which is not followed by a thorough Change and Amendment of Life, and a sincere Obedience to his Commandments; and since it is impossible for a dying Sinner to bring forth such Fruits of Repentance; how unsatisfactory must the Hopes be, that are built upon so uncertain a Foundation!

'Tis true, to repent is all that a Man, who has led a wicked Life, can do when he comes to die: and it would be well for his own Sake, and for the Sake of his sorrowful Friends and Relations, that he would do this much, and not go out of the World hardened and insensible; (for who knows how far infinite Mercy may be extended?) But surely, it must be allowed to be the greatest Instance of Folly and Madness, to venture a Matter of such infinite Moment upon so uncertain an Issue; upon a few broken, confused, and almost despairing Sighs and Groans. For if the remorse and Horrors, the solemn Vows and Resolutions of such Men should not prove a true godly Sorrow, a *Repentance to Salvation*

to be repented of, (as no Man can
say they certainly will) they are lost and
done to all Eternity.

But suppose we could be assured, that
Death-bed Repentance would be affec-
tual; yet who can tell, whether a Man
may have Time for that Work in the
Hour of Death? Or if he could be certain,
that a lingering Sickness would put an
End to his Days; yet how does he know
that God will then vouchsafe him the
Grace of Repentance! and without That,
his is impossible he should repent. O
how much rather may such an one fear,
lest God should be so provoked by his
many wilful Refusals to hearken to the
Calls and Admonitions of the Holy Spirit,
as to cut short his Day of Grace, and de-
liver him over to a hardened and reprobate
Mind!

The Scripture assures us, there is a
Time when Men shall call upon God, and
he will not hearken. *Because I have called, Prov. i.
and ye refused; I have stretched out my 24, &c.
Hand, and no Man regarded: But ye have
set at nought all my Counsel, and would
none of my Reproof: I also will laugh at
your*

your Calamity. I will mock when your Fear cometh; when your Fear cometh as Desolation, and your Destruction cometh as a Whirlwind; when Distress and Anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: For that they hated Knowledge, and did not chuse the Fear of the Lord; they would none of my Counsel. They despised all my Reproof; therefore shall they eat of the Fruit of their own Way, and be filled with their own Devices. The End of the Long-suffering and Forbearance of God, is to lead Men to Repentance: but if, instead of producing that blessed effect, it only hardens them in their Sins, and makes them resolve to go on in their wicked Courses, vainly presuming they shall repent, when they come to die; how just may it be in God to leave them at their last Hour under all the Terrors and Agonies of a fearful Death: to laugh at their Calamity, and to mock when their Fear cometh!

Rom. ii.
4.

O! consider this, all ye that forget God, lest he pluck you away, and there be none to deliver ye; consider it in due Time, before

your fore it is too late, before the dreadful
 as Hour comes upon you, when all Oppor-
 as tunities of reconciling yourselves to your
 misb offended God shall be taken from you,
 upon and the Door of Hope shall be for ever
 seek shut. Lay aside your Passions for a little
 For while, and listen to the Threatnings of
 not God's Holy Word, the Admonitions of
 could his blessed Spirit, and the Checks of your
 my own Consciences. Be persuaded to set
 the about the great Work of your Salvation,
 with to-Day, while it is called to-Day, before
 ng the Night cometh when no Man can work.
 to Remember, that though you are now,
 ad perhaps, in Health and Strength; in
 ar the Prime and Vigour of your Years;
 re surrounded with the Pleasures of a great
 nly and splendid Fortune; yet the Time is
 hey coming, and (whether you think of it or
 to not) will hasten on apace, when you
 all must take your Leave of all that is desir-
 h: able upon Earth. And nothing will then
 ber stand you in any Stead, but a good Con-
 science; neither Honours, nor Riches,
 od, nor any thing else that Men are now so
 to fond of, will then be able to give you
 e one Moment's Ease, or afford you one
 re comfort-

comfortable Thought. Nothing will be then regarded but the Consciousness of having in some Measure answered the End for which God sent you into the World; for having lived in the Fear and Love of God, *and in Simplicity and godly Sincerity had your Conversation in the World.*

2 Tim. iv.
7, 8.

It was this that made St. Paul desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ; for he had fought a good Fight, and finished his Course, and kept the Faith. And therefore he could say with great Assurance, when the Time of his Departure was at hand, that there was laid up for him a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, should give him at that Day.

And it was this that made a late pious * Divine of our Church, when he was near his Death, utter these remarkable Expressions. 'I am entering upon my last Labour; the Lord gave, and he is now taking away, blessed be the Name of the Lord: For I thank my God, I am going without any Distrust

* Mr. Kettlewell; see the Preface to his five Discourses published since his Death.

without

without the least Mis-giving, to a Place of Rest, and Joy, and everlasting Bliss. There is no Life like a happy Death. I have endeavoured, even from my Youth, to approve myself a faithful Servant to my great Master. I have taken some Pains in writing several Books; I have seriously considered them, and am fully satisfied (*looking on those about him*) that you may find in them the Way to Heaven. The Christian Duties contained therein have been my Practice, as well as Study: and now I find the Advantage of it. And therefore be careful to read them often and seriously, and live suitably thereunto, that when you come to the Condition I am now in, you may die with Comfort, as you see me do. I have some little Pain indeed; but my Pain is nothing so extraordinary as my Hopes: for I have earnestly repented of all my Sins, and verily believe, that through the tender Mercies of my God, and the Merits of my blessed Saviour *Jesus Christ*, I shall be carried up into *Abraham's Bosom*'. After which, it is said,

said, *he made this short Prayer.* ‘ I wait,
 ‘ O God, for that Everlasting Rest, which
 ‘ I want at present, but shall not long. I
 ‘ am ready, when thou, my God, callest
 ‘ for me; yet can stay with Patience till
 ‘ thou pleasest: for thy Time is the
 ‘ best Time, and thy Pleasure the best
 ‘ Pleasure.’

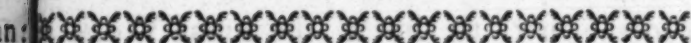
See here the End of a good Man: how calm, how serene and comfortable is his Death? Is there any Thing like this in the Case of a wicked Man, in the Hour of his Dissolution? Alas! no: if you behold such an one in his last Extremity, (unless he dies hardened and impenitent) you will hear little else but bitter Reflections, sad Bemoanings, wretched Upbraidings of himself for the Folly and Madness of his past Life; and these ending in despairing Sighs and Groans, black and dreadful to himself, and very terrible to all about him. May God, of his infinite Mercy, keep every one from such a dreadful Hour; and *teach us all so to number our Days, as to apply our Hearts unto true Wisdom:* That Wisdom, which will make us wise unto Salvation, and fill our Minds

with
 gran

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with Comfort and Satisfaction, while we live; and, what is of infinitely more Value, give us, when we come to die, *that Peace of God which passeth all Understanding, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*



A P R A Y E R.

 Most great and mighty God, in whose Hands are the Issues of Life and Death! Thou orderest all Things by thy infinite Power and Wisdom, and hast appointed for all Men once to die, and after this short Life is ended, hast of thy infinite Goodness provided for thy faithful servants, a State of endless Bliss and Happiness. O make me truly sensible of the Frailty and Uncertainty of my Life, and teach me so to number my Days, that I may apply my Heart unto true Wisdom. Let not Death ever surprize me unawares, nor find me in a State unprovided: But grant that I may live in such a constant
Pre-

Preparation for my latter End, that how suddenly soever thou shalt be pleased to take me out of this World, I may be found ready and prepared for that great Account, which I must one Day give before the Judgment-Seat of Christ. Enable me by the Assistance of thy Grace and Holy Spirit, to finish the great Work of my Salvation before the Night comes, when no Man can work, and to lay up a good Foundation of Hope and Comfort against the Hour of my Death; that, when the Time of my Departure shall come, I may look back upon a well-spent Life with Joy and Comfort, and may meet Death without Fear.

Look upon me, O most gracious God, when the Time of my Dissolution draws nigh, as a reconciled Father in Christ Jesus: Speak Peace unto my Conscience, and say unto my Soul, I am the God of thy Salvation. Let not the cruel Enemy of Souls affrighten me with his Terrors, but give thy Holy Angels Charge over me to keep me out of his Hands, and let the Comforts of thy Holy Spirit cheer and refresh my Soul, in its Passage through this

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s Vale of Tears and Misery, to a hap-
Eternity.

O Lord! leave me not to myself in
Time of Distress, when I shall stand
so much need of Thee. Confirm my
faith, support me in my dying Agonies,
and forsake me not, when my Strength
feth. Let thy merciful Ears, O God,
then open to my Prayers; and spare
me, O Lord most holy, O God most
mighty, O holy and merciful Saviour,
thou most worthy Judge eternal! suffer
not at my last Hour, through any
Infirmities of Body or Weakness of Mind, to
disavow my Dependence upon Thee: But
grant, O merciful Father, that with an
unshakable Reliance on thy Mercies, and the
infinite Merits of my dear Redeemer, and
with an entire Submission to thy blessed
Will, I may chearfully resign up my Soul
into thy Hands, and may be willing and
desirous to leave this World, when
thou, my God, in thy great Wisdom shall
judge it fitting.

O Lord! let me never be separated
from Thee: but grant that my Soul may
be united to Thee (who art the Ful-
ness

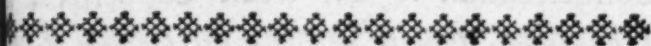
The Great Importance

ness of all Happiness) by the strongest Ties of Faith, Love and Obedience, that after a Life spent here in thy Service, may dwell with Thee in Life everlasting and be received into those Mansions of Eternal, Bliss, and Glory, which Thou hast prepared for them that truly love and fear Thee ; through the Merits and for the sake of thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord and only Saviour. Amen.





THE
GREAT IMPORTANCE
OF A
RELIGIOUS LIFE.



CHAP. III.

✻✻✻ Itherto I have considered the
H great Advantages of Religion,
✻✻✻✻ as they respect only our Well-
*✻✻✻✻ being in this World, and our
going comfortably out of it. But, as
there are other Advantages attending a good
Life, infinitely beyond all that have been
mentioned; namely, that it will entitle
us, through the Merits of *Christ Jesus*,
to an *Inheritance incorruptible, and unde-*
filed, and that fadeth not away; I shall en-
E deavour

deavour to shew, in the last Place, that a serious and conscientious Observance of the Duties of Religion, will most certainly be rewarded with eternal Happiness in the Life to come.

And here I shall not presume so much as to aim at a Description of *that exceeding Weight of Glory*, which God has reserved for them that truly love him. In the Scripture, indeed, the Glories of the other World are represented to us, in Condescension to our weak Capacities, as *a Kingdom, and a Crown, an eternal Kingdom, and a never-fading Crown*: But the State of the other World is a State so unknown to us, and so much above our imperfect Conceptions, that we shall never be able fully to comprehend it, till we arrive at the actual Enjoyment of it. For though we know that we shall there see God, and the blessed Jesus, who *loved us, and gave himself for us*, and shall to all Eternity enjoy Him, who is the Source and Fountain of all Good; that we shall there converse with Saints and Angels, and for ever be singing Anthems of Praise to our great Creator and Redeemer; yet how

how great the Pleasure of this will be, and with what Extasies and Raptures our Souls shall then break forth, when they taste of that *Fulness of Joy which is in the Presence of God for evermore*, is what our finite Understandings cannot possibly reach. Of this we may rest assured, that the Things which God has reserved for them that love him, are such as neither Eye hath seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entered into the Heart of Man to conceive. And as this is sufficient for us at present, and as much as we need to know concerning this Matter; all curious Inquiries into the Nature of the Happiness of the next Life, will be of small Use to us: They may fill our Heads with fine Speculations, but will signify little to direct our Practice. What we are more concerned to know is, that our sincere Obedience to God's Commandments, will certainly be rewarded with eternal Life and Happiness. Of this, indeed, it is a Matter of great Importance to us, to be well assured; that we may not be weary of well-doing, but *may run with Patience* Heb. xii.

Phil. iii. *The Race that is set before us, and press to-
 24. wards the Mark for the Prize of the high
 Calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

There are some indeed (and a melancholy Consideration it is that there are any such) who would have us believe, that we die like the Beasts that perish, and that, when we leave this World, there is an End of us. But these, upon Inquiry, I believe, will be always found to be such, who first live as if there was no God, and then endeavour to persuade themselves and others, that there really is none; so that, instead of regulating their Practice by their Faith, they do most preposterously suit their Faith to their Manners. I shall not concern myself at present with these Men; my Design being chiefly for the Sake of those who believe the Christian Religion, and the Revelation of God's Will in the Holy Scriptures. And surely to such it can be no Doubt, but that in those sacred Writings *we have eternal Life*; and that the Performance of God's Commandments, is the certain Condition of obtaining it.

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Indeed, natural Religion will teach us, not only that *God is, but that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* But it has pleased God, of his great Goodness, not to leave us to the Light of Nature, to find out this weighty Truth. The Rewards of another Life are so fully and clearly revealed in the Writings of our Saviour and his Apostles; and the Way to obtain them is there so plainly laid down, that there is no Room for any Doubt, or Uncertainty, about the Matter. Whatever dark or imperfect Notions the *Jews*, as well as *Gentiles*, had of a future State, it is certain *that Life and Immortality is now brought to Light by the Gospel:* and we may rest assured, that though when we die, our Bodies shall be laid in the cold Chambers of the Grave, and there become the Food of Worms, and moulder into Dust and Rottenness; yet it will not be long ere *this corruptible* ^{1 Cor. xv.} *shall put on Incorruption, and this mortal* ^{53.} *shall put on Immortality.* For God hath appointed a Day, in the which he will judge ^{Acts xvii.} *the World in Righteousness, by that Man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath*

given Assurance unto all Men, in that he hath
 2 Cor. v. raised him from the Dead: A Day wherein
 10. we must all appear before the Judgment seat
 of Christ, that every one may receive the
 Things done in his Body, according to that he
 hath done, whether it be good or bad. And
 John v. then all that are in their Graves shall hear his
 28, 29. Voice, and shall come forth: they that have
 done Good, unto the Resurrection of Life, and
 they that have done Evil, unto the Resurrec-
 tion of Damnation.

Whoever then believes the Gospel, (as
 every one must, that lives under the In-
 fluence of it, unless he is wretchedly
 blinded by his Lusts and Passions) can
 never doubt of these two great Articles of
 the Christian Religion, *the Resurrection of
 the Body, and the Life everlasting.* The Pos-
 sibility of the former has been made evi-
 dent by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ
 from the Dead; and the Certainty of the
 latter appears from the express Revela-
 tions of God in the Holy Scriptures.
 Indeed the whole Tenor of the Chris-
 tian Religion sufficiently proves it; every
 Precept of which tends to purify and re-
 fine our Natures, and to fit and prepare
 us

is for the Society of Saints and Angels in another Life. The *Apostle* assures us, that God hath not appointed us to Wrath, *1 Thess. v.* but to obtain Salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that we should live together with him. And St. John tells us, *John iii.* that God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, to the End that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting Life.

If then we believe, that God is infinitely just and true, we can never doubt that at the great Day of Retribution, he will render to every Man according to his Deeds: *to Rom. ii.* them who by patient Continuance in well doing, *6, 7, 8, 9.* seek for Glory and Honour and Immortality, He who is Truth itself and cannot deceive, will give eternal Life; but to them, who are contentious, and do not obey the Truth, but obey Unrighteousness, he will pour forth Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguish, upon every Soul of Man that doth Evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.

Our Saviour, in his Exposition of the Parable of the Tares, tells us, that at the End of the World, the Son of Man shall

Matt. xiii.

send forth his Angels, and they shall gather out of his Kingdom all Things that offend, and them which do Iniquity, and shall cast them into a Furnace of Fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of Teeth. And so in his Exposition of the Parable of the Net in the same Chapter, he says, that at

Ver. 49, *the End of the World, the Angels shall come*
 50. *forth, and sever the Wicked from among the Just; and shall cast them into the Furnace of Fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of Teeth. Thus again we are*

Mat. xxv. *told by our Saviour, that when the Son of*
 31, 32, *Man shall come in his Glory, and all the*
 33, 34. *holy Angels with him, then shall he sit upon the Throne of his Glory, and before him shall be gathered all Nations, and he shall separate them one from another, as a Shepherd divideth his Sheep from the Goats; and he shall set the Sheep on his right Hand, but the Goats on the Left. Then shall he say unto them on his right Hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Beginning of the*

Ver. 41. *World: But to them on the left Hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his*
 Angels.

Angels. And these shall go away into ever-lasting Punishment, but the Righteous into Life eternal. Ver. 46.

This, as it is a plain but lively Description of the awful Solemnity of that great and tremendous Day, *when the Son of Man* Matt. xvi. *shall come in the Glory of his Father, with* 27. *his Angels, to judge the Quick and the Dead;* so it is sufficient to convince us, that though *without Holiness no Man shall* Heb. xii. *see the Lord,* yet that every one who ^{14.} believes the Gospel, and sincerely obeys the Precepts of it, shall assuredly enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. This was the very Purchase of Christ's Blood, and the End for which he was contented to be given up into the Hands of cruel Men, to be buffeted, spit upon, and evil-entreated, and at last to suffer a cruel and ignominious Death upon the Cross. *He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and become the Author of eternal Salvation to all them that obey him.* Though he was rich, yet for our Sakes he 2C r.viii. became poor, that he through his Poverty 9. might be made rich. He was wounded for Is. liii. 5. our Transgressions, he was bruised for our

Iniquities; the Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and with his Stripes we are healed.

The Redemption of Mankind was thought a Design worthy the Son of God: Of so great Worth and Value in his Sight were the Souls of Men, that he esteemed nothing too much, or too great, to suffer for their Sakes! He saw and pitied our Misery, and knew that without a Saviour we must be lost for ever; and therefore condescended so far, as to humble himself even to the Death upon the Cross, for us miserable Sinners, who lay in Darkness and the Shadow of Death, that he might make us the Children of God, and exalt us to everlasting Life: So that, tho'

Ephes. ii. *we were sometimes afar off, yet being now*
 13, 19. *made nigh by the Blood of Christ, we are*
no more Strangers and Foreigners, but Fel-
low-citizens with the Saints, and of the
Household of God. And if we are careful to perform our Parts, we may assuredly say

2 Tim. iv. *with St. Paul, that henceforth there is laid*
 8. *up for us a Crown of Righteousness, which*
the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give us
at that Day. For we have the Promise of
 Him

Him who is *Truth* itself, and cannot deceive us, that if we are *faithful unto Death*, Revel. ii. he will give us a *Crown of Life*. 10.

And what a glorious Incitement is this to all Men, to live *soberly, righteously and godlily in this present World* ! What can we desire more to make us *steadfast* 1 Cor. xv. and *unmoveable, always abounding in the* 58. *Work of the Lord*, than to know that our *Labour shall not be in vain in the Lord* : That no good Action, which we do, shall be lost and fruitless ; but that in a little Time all our Services will be infinitely rewarded : That every Grace and Virtue, which we exercise in this Life, and every Degree of them, shall receive their *just Recompence at the Resurrection of the just* ; and that, if we serve God faithfully and sincerely in this Life, we may be assured, that through the tender Mercies of our heavenly Father, and the Merits of our Redeemer, we shall be received into a Place of everlasting Rest and Peace ; where we shall adore and praise the Author of our Salvation, and contemplate the glorious Perfections of his Majesty, with a Joy and Satisfaction infinitely ex-

ceeding all that we can now possibly conceive?

‘ O blessed Time, (*to use the Words of Archbishop Tillotson*) ‘ when Mortality
 ‘ shall be swallowed up of Life, and Death
 ‘ and Sorrow shall be no more! When
 ‘ we shall be eased of all our Pains, and
 ‘ resolved of all our Doubts, and be
 ‘ purged from all our Sins, and be freed
 ‘ from all our Fears, and be happy beyond
 ‘ our Hopes, and have all this Happiness
 ‘ secured to us beyond the Power of Time
 ‘ and Change!’

Col. i.
12, 13.

As the Consideration of these Things cannot but at present fill our Hearts *with Joy unspeakable*, and excite us continually *to give Thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light; who hath delivered us from the Power of Darknefs, and translated us into the Kingdom of his dear Son*: So, when we come to have a nearer and more immediate View of the Glories of that Kingdom which God hath prepared for us, how will our Souls break forth into Extasies of Love and Joy! How will it transport us to see him, whom

we

we have loved and faithfully served; to see him, not arraigned for a Malefactor, nor hanging in a shameful Manner upon the Cross; but to see him in all his Majesty and Glory, sitting in a triumphant Manner upon his Throne, adored by Angels and Arch-Angels; *thousand thousands* Dan. viii. *ministering unto him, and ten thousand times*^{10.} *ten thousand standing before him!* To see him, I say, not as an angry and incensed Judge, but as a merciful Saviour and Redeemer, looking upon his faithful and beloved Servants with the tenderest Affection, and receiving them to the Arms of his everlasting Mercy, with those ravishing Words, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World!*

But then, on the other Hand, with what Anguish and Despair will the Wicked and Ungodly behold the dreadful Solemnities of that Day! How will they tremble and be confounded, when the Lord Jesus shall be *revealed from Heaven, with his mighty An-* Thes. i. *gels, in flaming Fire, taking Vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ?* When they

2 Pet. iii. 10. they shall see the *Heavens passing away with a great Noise, and the Elements melting with fervent Heat; the Earth also, and the Works that are therein, burnt up!* When they shall behold the Jaws of Hell open to receive them, and the great Judge of the World with Terror in his Looks ready to pronounce that dreadful Sentence, *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels!*

O! what Confusion and Agonies will those Souls be in, to whom these dreadful Words shall then be spoken! How will they call upon the Mountains and Rocks to fall on them, and to hide them from the Face of him that sitteth on the Throne, and from the Wrath of the Lamb! —But alas! what will that avail them, when the great Day of his Wrath is come! Whether shall they betake themselves, when —xx. 11. *both the Earth and the Heaven shall flee from the Presence of the Judge!* If the Saviour of the World condemns them, who shall intercede in their Behalf? If he, that once died to purchase their Salvation, will not save them, (as it is certain he will not save

the Wicked and Impenitent,) to whom shall they flee for Succour! It will then be too late to cry for Mercy, when the Time of Judgment is come; too late to lament their Folly and Madneſs, when the Time of Working is over; all Prayers and Entreaties, all Tears and Repentance, will then be in vain. *He that is un-* Rev. xxii.
juſt, muſt be unjuſt ſtill, and he that is ^{11.}
filthy, muſt be filthy ſtill: As the Tree is
fallen, ſo it muſt lie for ever. The Time
 of Trial, the Day of Grace is ended, and ^{Heb. x.}
there remains no more Sacrifice for Sin; but ^{26, 27.}
a fiery Indignation muſt devour them. The
 dreadful Hour is come, when they muſt
 be baniſhed for ever from the Enjoyment
 of Him, *in whoſe Preſence alone is Ful-*
neſs of Joy; and be doomed to thoſe Lakes
 of Fire and Brimſtone, *where the Worm*
dieth not, and the Fire is not quenched;
 where they muſt be bound in everlaſting
 Chains, and be *Day and Night for ever* ^{Rev. xx.}
and ever tormented by the Devil and his ^{10.}
 accuſed Spirits, thoſe cruel and unrelent-
 ing Beings, in the burning and ſcorching
 Flames of a moſt outrageous and never to
 be extinguished Fire.

‘ Could

' Could I represent to you (says Arch-
 bishop Tillotson in one of his excellent
 Sermons) ' the Horror of that dismal
 ' Prison, into which wicked and impure
 ' Souls are to be thrust, and the Misery
 ' they must there endure, without the
 ' least Spark of Comfort or Glimmering
 ' of Hope; how they wail and groan
 ' under the intolerable Wrath of God,
 ' the insolent Scorn and Cruelty of De-
 ' vils, the severe Lashes and Stings, the
 ' raging Anguish and horrible Despair of
 ' their own Minds, without Intermision,
 ' without Pity, and without Hope of
 ' ever seeing an End of that Misery,
 ' which yet is unsupportable for one Mo-
 ' ment: Could I represent these Things
 ' to you according to the Terror of them,
 ' what Effect must they have upon us!
 ' and with what Patience could any Man
 ' bear to think of plunging himself into
 ' this Misery; and by his own wilful
 ' Fault and Follies endanger his coming
 ' into this Place and State of Torments !'

O! who indeed can think of these
 Things without resolving in good earnest
 to flee from the Wrath to come, and to
 secure

Of a RELIGIOUS LIFE.

91

secure a happy Eternity, by a Life of Virtue and Righteousness! Who, that believes *the wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the People that forget God*; that considers what it is to dwell in the most exquisite Misery and Torments to all Eternity; who, I say, that considers these truths, will not immediately resolve *to have no Fellowship with the unfruitful Works of Darkness*, but give up himself entirely to the Service and Obedience of the blessed Jesus, with unfeigned Resolutions of *living soberly, righteously and godlily in this present World*! In short, who that is truly wise, and considers that Time itself is short, and that the Time of Man is much shorter; that Eternity has neither End nor Change, and that every Man is hastening to an eternal and unchangeable State, and will in a little Time be summoned to appear before the awful Tribunal of God, there to give an Account of his Actions; and according as he has behaved himself in this Life, be then consigned to a Place of endless Happiness or Misery;—I say, who that reflects upon these great and important Truths, with that Seriousness and Concern which they deserve, would

ever

ever resign his Integrity, and part with that invaluable Prize, a good Conscience, for the greatest Happiness this World could promise him! How is it possible that a Man, who will give himself Time to consider what it is to be under the eternal Displeasure of Almighty God, should do any Thing wilfully and deliberately, which he knows will provoke his Anger! What wise Man would not rather submit to the worst that could befall him here in a *short* Life, than run the least Risque of offending Him, on whom his Welfare and Happiness must depend hereafter, as well as at present; not only in this Life, but through all Eternity! Especially when he considers what Obligations he is under to approve himself a faithful Servant of his great Master, and to direct and govern his whole Conduct by the Will of his Creator: When he reflects upon the infinite Love of God, manifested in all the Works of his Creation and Providence, but especially in that stupendous Mystery of our Redemption: When he thinks upon the Breadth and Length, the Height and Depth of that Love

of God, which moved him to send his only-begotten Son into the World *to be the Propitiation for our Sins*, and to suffer a cruel and ignominious Death upon the Cross, *that we might not perish, but have everlasting Life!* O! how is it possible, but such an one must be filled with so grateful a Sense of what God has done for him, as to endeavour, all that in him lies, to requite the infinite Love of so merciful a Father, so kind and loving a Saviour!— Surely the Love of God must constrain us—But if there is any one so stupid and insensible, as not to be wrought upon by such powerful Motives, let him reflect upon *the Terrors of the Lord*, and ask himself seriously this important Question, whether he is able to *dwell with everlasting Burnings?* Let him think upon that terrible Day of the Lord, which, whether he thinks of it or not, will most assuredly come, *when all that are in their Graves shall bear his Voice, and shall come forth; they that have done Good, unto the Resurrection of Life, and they that have done Evil, unto the Resurrection of Damnation: When the Kings of the Earth, and* the

John v.
28, 29.

The Great Importance

the great Men and the rich Men shall hide themselves in the Dens and in the Rocks of the Mountains; and shall say to the Mountains and Rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the Face of him, that sitteth on the Throne, and from the Wrath of the Lamb. Let him revolve in his Thoughts the miserable Condition of those wretched Souls, that are now shut up in the Regions of everlasting Darknes, amongst an accursed Company of infernal Spirits; and then tell me, whether he thinks the short and momentary Pleasures of a wicked Life, will compensate for endless Misery and Torments?

There is no one, I believe, that thinks at all, but must think otherwise; but the great Misfortune is, many Men are so agitated by their Lusts and Passions, that they are seldom cool enough for sober Reflections. But would they be persuaded frequently to meditate upon Death and Judgment; would they represent to their Minds what a vast Disproportion there is betwixt Time and Eternity, and consider that the Pleasures of Sin, at best, *are but for a Season*, but that its Punishment

ment is endless and intolerable; I say, could Men be brought to think of these Things with any Seriousness, I doubt not but such Thoughts would in Time have their proper Effect, and would so thoroughly convince them of the great Folly and Danger of Sin, as to make them in good Earnest set about the great Work of their Salvation.

* The Judgment to come is a very amazing Consideration; it is a fearful Thing to hear of it, but it will be much more terrible to see it, especially to those, whose Guilt must needs make them so heartily concerned in the dismal Consequences of it: and yet, as sure as I stand and you sit here, *this great and terrible Day of the Lord will come, and who may abide his coming!* What will we do when that Day shall surprize us careless and unprepared! What unspeakable Horror and Amazement will then take hold of us; when *lifting up our Eyes to Heaven, we shall see the Son of Man coming in the Clouds of it, with Power and great Glo-*

The Great Importance

'ry; when that powerful Voice, which
 'shall pierce the Ears of the Dead, shall
 'ring through the World, *Arise, ye Dead,*
 'and come to Judgment; when the mighty
 'Trumpet shall sound, and wake the
 'Sleepers of a thousand Years, and sum-
 'mon the dispersed Parts of the Bodies
 'of all Men, that ever lived, to rally to-
 'gether and take their Places; and then
 'Souls and Bodies of Men, which have
 'been so long Strangers to one another,
 'shall meet, and be united again, to re-
 'ceive the Doom due to their Deeds;
 'what Fear shall then surprize Sinners,
 'and how will they tremble at the Pre-
 'sence of the great Judge, and for the
 'Glory of his Majesty? How will their
 'Consciences fly in their Faces, and
 'their own Hearts condemn them for
 'their wicked and ungodly Lives, and
 'even prevent that Sentence, which yet
 'shall certainly be past and executed upon
 'them?'

O! let me then intreat every one, with
 all the Earnestness that a Matter of such
 vast Importance requires, frequently and
 seriously to think upon the tremendous

Day of Judgment, and that great Ac-
 count they must then give; to consider
 with themselves how their Accounts stand,
 with respect to another Life; and what
 a dreadful Condition they will be in, if
 they should be called to appear at the
Judgment seat of Christ, before they have
 made their Peace with God, and secured
 an Interest in the Merits and Intercession
 of their great Judge. But especially let
 me persuade those, who, in Pursuit of
 their unlawful Pleasures, have plunged
 themselves in Sensuality and Wickedness,
 to stand still a Moment, and consider
 whither they are going. Let me beg of
 them, as they have any Regard for their
 present Peace and Happiness, or any Va-
 lue for their precious Souls; as they
 would not leave this World under the
 terrors and Agonies of a guilty Consci-
 ence, nor appear at the last Day, in the
 presence of God, of Angels and of Men,
 under all the Circumstances of Horror,
 shame and Confusion; and lastly, as they
 would not then be banished from the Pre-
 sence of God for ever, and be cast into
 the bottomless Pit of Destruction, to be
 there

- there tormented without Measure, and without End; let me, I say, prevail upon them, not to delay their Repentance one Moment, but immediately forsake their evil Ways, and turn unto the Lord their God, who is gracious and merciful, slow to Anger, and of great Kindness; and who has assured us by his Prophet, that when the wicked Man turneth away from ever his Wickedness that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his Soul alive.
- Joel ii. 13. *their evil Ways, and turn unto the Lord their God, who is gracious and merciful, slow to Anger, and of great Kindness; and who has assured us by his Prophet, that when the wicked Man turneth away from ever his Wickedness that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his Soul alive.*
- Ezek. xviii. 27. *when the wicked Man turneth away from ever his Wickedness that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his Soul alive.*

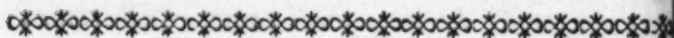
- As for those happy Christians, who have entered upon a good Life, and are engaged in the Practice of Virtue and Religion; who make the Glory of God, and the Salvation of their own and others Souls, their great Care and Concern, need only exhort them to go on in their Christian Course with Courage and Resolution; to hold fast their Profession, and with an unwearied Diligence to press towards their Mark, for the Prize of the high Calling of God in Christ Jesus; nothing doubting, but that he that hath begun good Work in them, will perform it until the Day of Jesus Christ. God is faithful
- Heb. iv. *lution; to hold fast their Profession, and*
- Phil. iii. 14. *with an unwearied Diligence to press towards their Mark, for the Prize of the high Calling of God in Christ Jesus; nothing*
- Phil. i. 6. *doubting, but that he that hath begun good Work in them, will perform it until the Day of Jesus Christ. God is faithful*

and that has promised; and therefore they
 up-may rest assured, that he will remember
 nce and reward *their Work of Faith, and La- 1 Thes. i.*
 ke our of Love, and Patience of Hope in our ^{3.}
 ord Lord Jesus Christ; and that in due Season Gal. vi. 9.
 ful, they shall reap, if they faint not. Yet a lit- Heb. x.
 and le while, and he that shall come, will come; ^{37.}
 that and his Reward is with him, to give to Rev. xxii.
 from every Man according as his Work shall be. ^{12.}
 and to him that overcometh, he will grant to Rev. iii.
 be with him in his Throne; even as he also ^{21.}
 overcame, and is sat down with his Father
 who on his Throne.

are O happy, happy Time for those blessed
 Re-souls, who have fought the good Fight, and
 and cept the Faith! All their Labours will
 here then be at an End, and that Crown of Rev. ii.
 e, Life, which God has promised to his ^{10.}
 their faithful Servants, will then be bestowed
 Refo-upon them, and they shall be admitted to
 and an Inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, ^{1 Pet. i. 4.}
 s to and that fadeth not away: They shall then
 bige received into a Place of endless Bliss
 chind Joy, where there shall be no more Rev. xxi.
 un Death, neither Sorrow nor Crying, neither ^{4.}
 untill there be any more Pain, but all Tears
 hful all be wiped from their Eyes: and they
 tha shall

The Great Importance

shall for ever enjoy the most perfect and consummate Happiness, and sing eternal *Allelujahs of Praise and Thanksgiving unto him that sitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever. Amen.*

*The Conclusion.*

IF a Good Life is attended with so many Advantages, as, hope, I have shewn it to be. If it will make us live happily, as die comfortably, and at last intitle us, through the Merits of our Saviour *Jesus Christ*, to an eternal Inheritance in that Kingdom, which he has purchased for us with his most precious Blood; and if, on the other Hand, Guilt is its own Punishment in this World, and everlasting Misery will most certainly be the Lot and Portion of the Wicked and Impenitent in the next; *what Manner of Persons ought we to be in all holy Conversation and Godliness! And how stedfast and immoveable should this make us in the Ways of our God's Laws, and in the Works of his*

Com-

Commandments? With what Indignation and Abhorrence should we look upon Sin, and with what Speed should we flee from that dreadful Enemy of our Souls, that would rob us of our present, as well as future, Happiness? How should the Consideration of these Things make us take heed lest there be in any of us an evil Heart of Unbelief, in departing from the living God: and how stedfastly should we resolve to have no Fellowship with the unfruitful Works of Darkness, but to walk as Children of Light in the Ways of true Piety and Holiness; and not to delay for one Moment the Care of our immortal Souls?—*The Day is far spent, the Night is at Hand*, and there is no Time to be lost. We have a great Work to do: a Work that will deserve our utmost Care and Diligence. If we perform it well, great will be our Reward in Heaven: For faithful is He that has promised. And we may be assured, that if we are diligent and industrious in that Work which God has assigned to us in this World, our Labour shall not be in vain in the Lord: for if we have our Fruit unto Holiness, our End

Philip ii. 12. *will be everlasting Life. But if, instead of working out our Salvation with Fear and Trembling, that is, with the greatest Care and Circumspection, we are negligent and remiss in the Service of our great Lord and Master Jesus Christ; if, instead of living soberly, righteously and godly in this present World, we lead vicious and wicked Lives, and spend our Days in Sin and Vanity; miserable will be our Condition both here and hereafter. For although God is a Being of infinite Goodness and Mercy, and is Patient and Long-suffering towards Sinners, being unwilling that any should perish, but that all should come to Repentance; yet we must remember, that he is also infinitely just, and will assuredly vindicate the Honour of his Laws. All Sin and Wickedness is an Abomination in his Sight. He is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity: and if his Wrath be kindled, yea but a little, what will become of the Wicked and Ungodly? Nothing but a sincere Repentance and Amendment of Life will be sufficient to secure them from the Vengeance, which he has threatened to pour down upon all obstinate and rebellious*

bellious Sinners: and true Repentance will most undoubtedly avert his Anger. He has declared himself to be a *God merciful and gracious, forgiving Iniquity, Transgression and Sin*, and has promised Forgiveness of Sins to all them, that with hearty Repentance and true Faith turn unto him. *He hath no Pleasure in the Death of the Wicked, but that the Wicked should turn from his Way and live.* And in order, to assure us of his great Love to Mankind, and of his sincere Desire to be reconciled unto us, *He hath sent his Son,* John iii. 16. *his only, his beloved Son, into the World, to the End, that all that believe in him, should not perish, but have everlasting Life.*

It has pleased God, of his infinite Goodness, to establish a most gracious Covenant of Mercy with Mankind through the Mediation of his own Son: And the Condition on his Part of the Covenant, the Remission of Sins, is always ready to be made good, if we fail not, on our Part, of sincere Repentance and a thorough Reformation of our Lives. Our Saviour has made a full, perfect, and sufficient Sacrifice, Oblation

and Satisfaction for the Sins of the whole World: He has suffered a cruel and ignominious Death upon the Cross, for our Sakes; and by his Death and Sufferings has purchased this Grace for us, that real Repentance and the sincere Endeavour of perfect Obedience shall be accepted instead of Innocence. But without this Repentance and renewed Endeavour of perfect Obedience, we shall not be accepted upon any Terms. The Sacrifice, which he offered upon the Cross, although of infinite Value, will be of no Avail to us, unless, in Conformity to his Death and Resurrection, we die unto Sin, and rise again unto Newness of Life. Nothing but a good Life will entitle us to the Favour and Love of God: And without his Favour, *we are of all Creatures the most miserable.* Better had it been for us never to have been born, than to have made God our Enemy, by leading vicious and wicked Lives. Let it then, above all Things, be our great and constant Endeavour to make Him our Friend, who is the best of Beings, the Sovereign Good and Happiness of all his Creatures, and the Fountain and Foundation of all our Comforts and Enjoyments in this Life,

and

and of all our Hopes and Expectations in that which is to come. Let us make Religion the great Business of our Lives; and, while we have Time and Opportunity, let us prepare ourselves, by a Life of Virtue and Righteousness, for that great Account, which we must one day give. Let not the Pleasures and Vanities of this World, which will shortly have an End, make us unmindful of the great and momentous Concerns of Eternity—O! Eternity! how amazing are the Thoughts of it! Who, that considers what it is to live for ever in a State of endless Happiness or Misery, would not labour and strive with all his Might, to secure the one and avoid the other? Now this can only be done by a good Life: *for without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord.* Heaven is prepared for those only, who fear God, and live in a strict Endeavour to perform a perfect Obedience to his Will. *There shall in no* Rev. xxi. *wise enter into that holy Place any thing that* 27. *defileth, neither whatsoever worketh Abomination or maketh a Lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.* And those only are the Good and Virtuous, who

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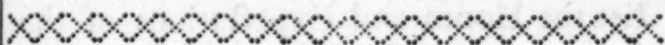
have

have kept themselves from the Pollutions of this wicked World, and have led a Life of Piety and renewed Obedience towards God, and of Love and Charity towards their Neighbours. To all others, that blessed *Lamb of God* will declare *he knows them not*. To the *Workers of Iniquity*, even that merciful and compassionate Saviour will say, *Depart from me*.—Dreadful Words! Whither must such wretched Souls go, when they are bidden to depart from the Saviour of the World!—Whither indeed, but to that dismal Place of Horror and everlasting Misery *prepared for the Devil and his Angels!*

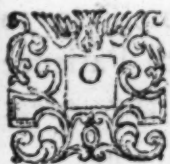
May God of his infinite Mercy give all of us Grace to see and follow the Things that belong to our everlasting Peace, lest they be hid from our Eyes, and all Opportunities of reconciling ourselves to our offended God be for ever lost and gone!—May every one of us be persuaded to hearken to the Advice of *Solomon*: *Fear God and keep his Commandments, for this is the whole Duty of Man. For God shall bring every Work into Judgment, and every secret Thing, whether it be Good, or whether*

Ecclef.
xii. 13,
14.

whether it be Evil.—And may we always keep in Remembrance that merciful Caution of our blessed Lord and Saviour; *Watch therefore, for ye know neither the* Matt. xxv. *Day nor the Hour, wherein the Son of Man¹³ cometh.*



A P R A Y E R.



Most glorious Lord God, and our most merciful Father in Christ Jesus, who hast prepared for them that love thee, such good Things as pass Man's Understanding, and hast promised to give eternal Life to them, who, by patient Continuance in well-doing, seek for Glory and Honour and Immortality; Give me, I most humbly beseech thee, a firm and unshaken Faith in all thy Promises: that, being fully persuaded of those important Truths, which thou hast revealed to us in the Gospel, I may make it the principal Care and Concern of my whole Life, to please and obey thee in all Things. And, that I may obtain those

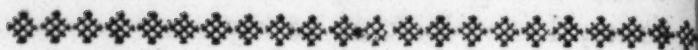
Things, which thou dost promise, make me to love that, which thou dost command: and grant, that, by the Assistance of thy Holy Spirit, I may be enabled to persevere in the Practice of a holy Life, even to the last Moment of my Days.

Let the Hopes and Expectations of that unspeakable Happiness, which thou hast prepared for us hereafter, enable me to pass through this Vale of Tears and Misery with Chearfulness and Submission to thy blessed Will, and to bear with Patience whatever Troubles Thou, in thy great Wisdom, shall see fit to lay upon me.

O Lord! give me a Heart raised above the Vanities and Enticements of this World, and free from all the Pollutions and Defilements of it. Fix my Thoughts, my Hopes, and my Desires, upon Heaven and heavenly Things: that having always in View that Crown of Glory, which thou hast laid up for us hereafter, I may press towards the Mark for the Prize of the high Calling of God in Christ Jesus; and being strengthened by thy Grace, and supported by thy Holy Spirit, I may run with Patience the
Race

Race which Thou hast set before us: that when the great Day of Retribution shall come, I may look up to my most merciful Judge with Joy and Comfort, and may hear those ravishing Words pronounced unto me, *Well done, thou good and faithful Servant, enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord.* Grant this, O merciful Father, through the alone Merits, and for the Sake of my Eternal Advocate and Mediator, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*



*A Morning-Prayer for a FAMILY.*

Most gracious God and kind Father! in all Humility of Soul and Body, we present ourselves before the Throne of thy Majesty and Glory, acknowledging that we are thy dependent Creatures, and that from thy bountiful Hands we have received many and exceeding great Blessings.

By Thee, at first, we were wonderfully made; by thy Power we have ever since been preserved; and it is owing to thy great Mercy and Goodness that we have not been cut off in the midst of our Sins, but that Thou hast been patient and long-suffering towards us, and hast given us this Opportunity of coming into thy Presence to renew our Praises and Acknowledgments to thy divine Majesty. O Lord, thy Compassion fails not: By Thee we have been preserved the Night past; and

to

to thy Goodness we ascribe it, that we are brought in Health and Safety to the Beginning of this Day.

Accept, we humbly pray Thee, of our unfeigned Thanks for all the Mercies and Blessings which thou hast been pleased to bestow upon us; and pardon, we beseech Thee, for the Sake of thy Son Christ Jesus, our great Unworthiness of what Thou hast done for us. Give us such a Sense of thy infinite Love and Kindness, as may engage us more and more to love and obey Thee, and make us afraid of every thing that may be displeasing in thy Sight.

O Lord, vouchsafe us such a Measure of thy Grace and Holy Spirit, as may defend us against the Snares and Temptations of this wicked World, and enable us to overcome all our corrupt and sinful Desires. Give us a true Sense of the inestimable Value of our Souls, that we may make it the chief Care and Concern of our Lives, to work out our Salvation with the greatest Care and Diligence, and to secure an Interest in thy Favour, which is better than Life itself.

With-

Withdraw our Minds from the Love of this World, and place them upon Heaven and heavenly Things. Give us Grace to use the Blessings, which thou art pleased to bestow upon us, with Temperance, Sobriety and Moderation; with an entire Trust and Dependence on thy fatherly Care and good Providence, and with perfect Submission to thy blessed Will in all Things.

O Lord! root out of our Hearts all Pride and Envy; all Hatred, Malice, and Ill-will. Put away from us all Censoriousness and Uncharitableness, all Lying and Slandering, and whatever else is contrary to a truly Christian Spirit: and endue us, we most humbly pray Thee, with that Meekness and Humility which thou in thy Sight of so great Value, and with all those holy and Christian Dispositions which thou lovest and delightest in.

Instruct us in all the Particulars of our Duty which we owe to Thee, our Neighbour, and ourselves. Guide us by thy right Hand, and conduct us by thy good Spirit, through all the Business and Affairs of this Life. Teach us to act with Faithfulness

the Sincerity and Honesty in every thing that we
undertake; and give us such a Dread of
thy Displeasure, and such a Sense of thy
constant Presence with us, as may secure
us, by thy Grace, against all the Temptations
of the World, the Flesh, and the
Devil.

Be with us, O Lord, this Day, where-
ever we go, and in whatsoever we do.
Preserve us from the Dangers of evil
company, from the Deceitfulness of our
own Hearts; and defend us more espe-
cially from those Sins, that are most apt
to betray and ensnare us. Let thy Bless-
ing accompany all our honest Labours,
and vouchsafe us such a Measure of
health and other temporal Blessings, as
thou seest best and most fitting for us. We
beseech thee, O Lord, to leave ourselves and
all our Concerns in thy Hands; humbly
beseeching Thee to take us, and all that
belong to us, under the Protection of thy
good Providence, and so to bless, direct
and guide us in this Life, that we may
at last obtain that greatest of all Blessings,
the Eternal Salvation of our immortal
souls, through the Merits and for the
Sake

*This is to
be omitted
on a Sun-
day Morn-
ing; and
what fol-
lows may
be used in-
stead
thereof.*

A Morning-Prayer

Sake of thy dear Son, and our alone Saviour, *Jesus Christ*: for whom our Souls adore and praise thy glorious Name, and in whose most holy Words we sum up our own, and the Wants of all Mankind, saying, *Our Father*, &c.

This is to be used on a Sunday Morning, instead of the foregoing Paragraph.

Dispose our Hearts, O Lord, we humbly beseech thee, to a serious Attendance upon thee in all holy Duties. Make us duly mindful of all thy sacred Institutions, and grant that we may never so far forget the Interest of our Souls, as to neglect the religious Observance of the Christian Sabbath. And as thou hast brought us to the Beginning of this sacred Day, so be Thou graciously pleased to take us into thy Protection, and to assist us in a right Discharge of the Duties of it. Withdraw our Minds from the Care and Business, and Pleasures of this Life (which will shortly have an End;) that we may more freely attend upon the great Concerns of that far better Life, which is to last for evermore. Give us awful Thoughts of thy great Majesty, and lively Sense of our own Wants, that our Prayers and Praises, and all our Services

vices

vices, may be offered up in such a serious and devout Manner, as may render them acceptable in thy Sight. Make us attentive to thy Holy Word, and to all the good Instructions that shall this Day be given us: and grant that we may not rest in mere outward Performances; but, by a right Use of thy holy Ordinances, may grow in Grace, and become every Day better Christians, and so improve in all virtuous and godly Living, that, when this short Life shall have an End, we may dwell with thee in Life everlasting, through the Merits of thy Son, and our alone Saviour, Jesus Christ: for whom our Souls bless and praise thee; and in whose most holy Words we sum up our own, and the Wants of all Mankind, saying, *Our Father, &c.*





An Evening-Prayer for a
FAMILY.

***** MOST merciful and gracious
 * O * Lord God, the great Creator,
 * * * Preserver and Governor of the
 ***** World! Thou art infinite in
 Mercy and Goodness to all that call
 upon thee faithfully, and hast promised,
 that when two or three are gathered toge-
 ther in thy Name, thou wilt be in the
 midst of them. Look down, we humbly
 beseech thee, upon us thy unworthy
 Creatures, who are here assembled be-
 fore thee, acknowledging, that thou art
 a God greatly to be feared for thy Power
 and Justice, greatly to be beloved for thy
 infinite Perfections and Goodness, and
 greatly to be praised for thy Bounty and
 merciful Kindness. But as for ourselves,
 we confess, O Lord, that we are vile and
 sinful Creatures; that we have in many
 things acted contrary to thy most holy
 Will, and have neither loved thee, feared
 thee,

thee, nor obeyed thee, as we ought to have done. O Lord! If thou shouldst deal with us as we have deserved, we could expect nothing from thee but the Severities of thy just Wrath and Displeasure.

But, O gracious Father, who delightest not in the Death of a Sinner, look upon us, we beseech thee, in thy Son Christ Jesus; and for the Sake of his meritorious Death and Sufferings, pardon our many and great Transgressions of thy holy Laws; and grant that we may amend whatever we have done amiss, and for the Time to come may be more careful to please thee, and more sincerely devoted to thy Service and Obedience.

Convince us thoroughly, O Lord, of the great Folly and Danger of Sin, and make us so afraid of offending Thee, that we may abstain from all Appearance of Evil, and do nothing but what is pleasing in thy Sight. Let the Interest of our immortal Souls be our chief Care and Concern; and grant, that we may live as becomes the Gospel of Christ, denying all Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and living righteously,

teously, soberly and godly in this present World.

But as without thee we are not able to please thee, grant us the Assistance of thy Grace and holy Spirit, that we may pass through all the Temptations of this World with Peace, and Innocence and Safety; and enable us to bear up with Courage and Resolution, against all the Assaults of our great Adversary the Devil, who is daily lying in wait to destroy us.

Suffer us not, O merciful God, to be led away by the vain and foolish Customs of this World, nor seduced from our Duty by the Company and Example of the Wicked and Ungodly; but grant that we may make thy Laws the Rule of all our Actions, and faithfully discharge our Duty in the several Places and Stations, wherein thy Providence is pleased to place us.

Make us duly mindful, that thou art present every where, and privy to our most secret Thoughts; that we may never dare to do any Thing but what thou approvest, and of which we may not fear

to give an Account at the great and terrible Day of the Lord Jesus. O! fit and prepare for that solemn Time, by a virtuous and holy Life: that when we shall appear before the great Judge of all the World, we may be found in the Number of those happy Souls, whom He shall then pronounce blessed!

Extend thy Mercy, O God, to all Mankind: Have Pity upon all *Jews, Turks, Infidels, Heretics, and Schismatics*, and bring them to the Light and Knowledge and Practice of thy Laws.

Bless thy Holy Catholic Church, and especially that Part of it which thou hast planted in these Kingdoms; remove out of it all Errors and Corruptions, all Divisions and Dissentions: and grant that the Lives of Christians may be holy and exemplary, and such as become the Gospel of our blessed Saviour.

Reform all things that are amiss in these Kingdoms. Root out from among us all Irreligion and Prophaneness, all Uncharitableness and Animosities. Pardon our great and crying Sins: avert the Evils that we have deserved; continue the Light of thy

An Evening-Prayer

thy glorious Gospel among us, and And
 give us all Grace to turn from the Evil Humil
 of our Ways unto thee, the Lord our incompe
 God.

Bless our Sovereign Lord the King manifo
 and all that are in Authority under him, ased to
 both in Church and State: Make them for thy
 all, in their several Places and Stations, World
 useful and serviceable to thy Glory, and Sufferi
 the Good and Welfare of this Church and We
 Nation.

And O thou, who art the Father of and Sa
 Mercies, and God of all Consolation, look iencie
 down with Pity and Compassion upon all Expe
 thy afflicted Servants every where. Give tender
 them Courage and Patience, Comfort O I
 and Support in thee, and, in thy good sleep
 Time, a joyful Deliverance out of all new f
 their Troubles.

Send down thy Blessings Spiritual and elves
 Temporal upon all our Friends and Rela- fore th
 tions. Do Good unto those that have at the D
 any Time done or wished us Evil: and We
 vouchsafe unto every one of us, and to worth
 all Christians, whatever thou knowest to out, i
 be best for our temporal and eternal Wel- and G
 fare.

And

And now, O Lord, we desire, with all Humility of Soul and Body, to adore thy incomprehensible Majesty, and to praise thy great and glorious Name for all thy manifold Mercies and Favours vouchsafed to us and all Mankind; but above all, for thy astonishing Love in reconciling the World unto thyself, by the Death and sufferings of thy dear Son.

We bless thee for our Creation and Preservation; for our Health, Strength, Peace, and Safety; for the Comforts and Conveniencies of this Life, and the Hopes and Expectations of a far better, through thy tender Mercies, in Christ Jesus.

O Lord, imprint on our Hearts such a deep Sense of thy Mercies, that we may shew forth thy Praises not only with our Lips, but in our Lives, by giving up ourselves to thy Service, and by walking before thee in Holiness and Righteousness all the Days of our Lives.

We confess, O Lord, that we are unworthy of the least of all thy Favours; but, in Confidence of thy infinite Mercy and Goodness, we do in great Humility recommend ourselves, our Souls and Bodies,
and

An Evening Prayer for a Family.

and all that belong to us, to thy fatherly Care and good Providence; humbly beseeching Thee, who art our only Safety and Defence, to take us this Night under thy Almighty Protection, and to give thy holy Angels Charge over us, that no Evil comes near to hurt us.

Refresh our Bodies with quiet Rest and Sleep, and our Souls with the Comforts of thy holy Spirit: and when thou shalt think fit to take us out of this World, give us everlasting Rest and Peace in thy eternal Kingdom, through the Merits, and for the Sake, of our blessed Saviour and Redeemer *Jesus Christ*, who hath taught us when we pray to say, *Our Father*, &c.

*A Morn*

*A Morning - Prayer for a Person in
private.*

***** MOST great, most mighty,
O and most glorious Lord God!
***** look down from the Habitation of thy Holiness upon me
thy unworthy Creature, who am come into thy Presence to adore thy incomprehensible Majesty, and to present before thee the Morning-Sacrifice of my unfeigned Praises, for the many and undeserved Favours thou hast bestowed upon me.

O Lord, I acknowledge, that to thee of Right belongs eternal Honour, Glory, Praise and Adoration: for thou art the Sovereign Lord of Heaven and Earth, by whom all Things were made, and by whose infinite Power and Goodness they are preserved and kept in Being.

Blessed be thy unspeakable Goodness, which hath advanced me to such a Degree of Being, that I am in some Measure capable

G

pable

A Morning-Prayer

pable to know thee, love thee, serve thee, and obey thee.

Blessed be thy Name, O Lord, that I was born of Christian Parents, and early dedicated to thee by Baptism; and that by thy Grace and Goodness I have been preserved to this Moment, and have in any Measure escaped the Pollutions of this wicked World.

I bless thee likewise, O Lord, for all thy temporal Mercies, and in particular for the Refreshments of the Night past; for protecting me from all evil Accidents, and for raising me up in Health and Safety to praise thy Goodness.

Pardon, O most gracious God, all the unworthy Returns I have made for thy exceeding Kindness and Mercy, and vouchsafe me such a Sense of thy infinite Love, as may inspire me with more vigorous and hearty Endeavours to serve thee for the Time to come.

O Lord, I acknowledge that I am a weak and frail Creature, and that without thy Help I am not able to bear up against the Trials and Temptations of this World. But since thou hast promised to give thy

Holy

Holy Spirit to them that ask it, I am emboldened to implore his divine Assistance to strengthen my Weakness, to help my Infirmities, and so to fortify my Mind, that I may not be tempted above what I am able to bear, nor seduced from my Duty to Thee, by the deceitful Inticements of the World, the Flesh, or the Devil.

Root out of my Heart, O God, all Pride and Vain-Glory ; all Bitterness and Uncharitableness ; all Envy, Hatred, and Malice ; and suffer me not to be led away by any of the foolish Customs and false Maxims of this World. And, O merciful Father, be thou pleased, of thy great Goodness, to endue me with that Wisdom which is from above, which is first pure, and then peaceable ; with that Meekness and Humility, which is in thy Sight of so great Price ; and with that truly Christian Temper and Disposition, which thou lovest and delightest in.

Lord, sanctify unto me all thy fatherly Dispensations, and let every Thing, Thou shalt think fit to send me, prove a Blessing and Advantage to my Soul. Give

me Grace to be entirely submissive and contented under all the Afflictions, Trials and Disappointments, which thy Wisdom shall judge proper in order to bring me to Thy-self; and grant that by every Adversity that shall befall me, I may be weaned from this World, and more closely united unto thee.

Make me always mindful of my own Frailty, of the Shortness and Uncertainty of this Life, and of the Eternity of the next. Give me Grace so to live, as I shall wish I had done when I come to die; let not Sicknes or Death ever surprize me unawares, or find me in a State unprovided; but grant that I may finish the great Work, which thou hast given me to do, before the Night cometh, when no man can work. O let me live in such a constant Preparation for my latter End, that how suddenly soever thou shalt be pleased to take me out of this World, I may be found ready and prepared for my great Account, through the Merits of my blessed Saviour and Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

Be

for a Person in private.

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Be with me, O Lord, this Day in all Places, and upon all Occasions. Direct and guide me, sanctify and preserve me. Keep me both outwardly in my Body, and inwardly in my Soul. Let thy Blessing accompany all my honest Designs and Undertakings, and grant that I may undertake nothing but what is agreeable to thy blessed Will. Give unto me, and all that belong to me, such a Measure of Health, and other temporal Blessings, as thou seest best and most fitting for us; but above all things, give us thy Grace and Favour; that our Lives may be holy, our Deaths comfortable, and our eternal State happy and glorious with thee, through the Merits of thy Son and our alone Saviour, Jesus Christ the righteous, in whose most holy Words I sum up my own and the Wants of all Mankind, saying,
Our Father, &c.

Accept, I beseech thee, O most gracious God, my hearty Desires in an especial Manner to glorify thee on this Day, which thou hast peculiarly sanctified for thy Worship and Service.

This is to be omitted on a Sunday Morning, and what follows may be used instead thereof.

Upon Sunday Morning, instead of the preceding Paragraph, this may be used.

G 3

I bless

A Morning-Prayer.

I bless thy holy Name, O Lord, who by thy Almighty Power madest the Heavens and the Earth and all that therein is, and preservest and governeest all that thou hast made.

I bless thee, O Lord, who madest Man after thine own Image, enduing him with Understanding, and Reason, and Liberty; and making him capable of knowing, and loving, and enjoying Thee his Creator.

Above all, I bless and magnify thy holy Name, O Lord, heavenly Father, that thou hast given thine only Son, Jesus Christ, for the Redemption of Mankind; that he took our Nature upon him; that he died for our Sakes; that he is risen again from the Dead; that he ascended into Heaven, and that he there sitteth at thy right Hand, to make Intercession for us; that he hath made known to us the Way to eternal Life, giving us his Word for our Direction, and his holy Spirit for our Guide and Assistance.

Blessed be thy Holy Name, that thou hast appointed this Day, not only for a Rest from our ordinary Labours and Employments, but chiefly for a perpetual
Comme-

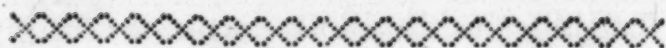
Commemoration of these thy Favours, and for giving us special Opportunities for thy Worship and Service, and the Care of our Souls.

My Soul desires to bless thee, that thou hast made me a Partaker of all these inestimable Favours.

O Lord, prepare my Heart for attending upon thee in thy House, and afford me thy gracious Assistance, in all the Parts of thy Service.

Let thy Word make deep and lasting Impressions upon me. Help me diligently to improve all Opportunities that shall be afforded me this Day, whether public or private, to the Glory of thy great Name, and the Benefit and Comfort of my Soul, through Jesus Christ my Saviour. *Amen.*





*An Evening-Prayer for a Person in
private.*

MOST great and mighty God !
 M Thou art the Sovereign Lord
 of Heaven and Earth, the Cre-
 ator, the Preserver, and Go-
 vernor of all things : thou dwellest in that
 Light, which no mortal Eye can ap-
 proach ; and yet disdainest not to behold
 the Children of Men. Look down, I be-
 seech thee, upon me thy unworthy Crea-
 ture, who am come into thy Presence,
 adoring thy Majesty, and acknowledging
 that my Dependence is wholly upon thee,
 who art the Author of my Being, and
 the Foundation of all my Hopes, both
 here and hereafter.

O Lord, I confess that I am a weak and
 frail Creature ; my Nature is corrupt, and
 miserably prone to offend thee. I find a
 Law in my Members warring against the
 Law in my Mind ; which, I confess with
 Sorrow, hath too often prevailed against
 me.

me. The Pleasures and Profits of the World are too apt to engage my Affections, and to make me cold and remiss in the great and important Work of my Salvation. I have been guilty of manifold Neglects and Omissions of my Duty towards thee, and have not served thee with that Purity of Intention, with that Sincerity of Heart, with that Fervency of Spirit, with that Zeal for thy Glory, with that Care, and Diligence, and Constancy, that I ought to have done.

O Lord, if thou shouldest be extreme to mark what is done amiss; if thou shouldest call me to a strict Account for my Life past, what could I say unto thee! Or how should I be able to stand in thy Sight! If thou shouldest deal with me as I have deserved, I could expect nothing from thee but the Severities of thy Wrath and Displeasure: But, O gracious Father, thou hast revealed thyself to the Sons of Men, as a God merciful and gracious, forgiving Iniquity, Transgression and Sin: remember then, I beseech thee, thy tender Mercies, which have been ever of old, and for the Sake and

Merits of my blessed Saviour, forgive, I humbly pray thee, all the Sins and Vanities, the Follies and Indiscretions of my Life past. O! reserve not my Sins to be punished in the Day of thy Wrath and Displeasure, but blot them out of thy Remembrance, that they may never rise up to my Confusion here, nor to my Condemnation hereafter.

O! enable me, by the Assistance of thy Grace, to reform whatever thou seest amiss in the Temper and Disposition of my Mind, or in any of the Actions of my Life; that I may love thee more, and serve thee better, and do thy Will with greater Care and Diligence, than I have yet done.

O Lord! keep up in my Mind a lively Sense of my Duty towards thee, and of that great Account, which I must one Day give. Suffer me not, I beseech thee, to fall into a careless and unthinking State, nor to be unmindful of that one thing needful, the Salvation of my immortal Soul. Make me so sensible of those dreadful Threatnings, which thou hast denounced against Sinners, that whatever
else

else I leave undone, I may make it my chief Care and Concern to secure an Interest in thy Favour. And, O merciful Father, be thou pleased, of thy great Goodness, so to assist my weak and feeble Endeavours, that I may not be unsuccessful in a Matter of such vast Concern.

Root out of my Heart, O God, by the powerful Efficacy of thy Grace, all sinful and corrupt Affections. Wean me from the Vanities and Pleasures of this World, and give me a full Conviction of the Uncertainty and Insufficiency of all Things here below. O! let me never seek for Rest and Happiness in the Enjoyments of this Life; but grant that I may daily aspire after that eternal and unchangeable State of Happiness, which thou hast reserved for us hereafter; and to which, I beseech thee, of thy infinite Love and Mercy, to bring me, and all thy faithful Servants, through the Merits, and for the Sake of thy dear Son, *Jesus Christ*, our Lord.

Extend thy Mercy, O God, to all Mankind: In a more particular Manner,

I pray thee to be gracious to these sinful Nations to which I belong; to pardon our great and crying Sins; to avert the Judgments which we have most justly deserved, and to put away from us the Spirit of Profaneness and Infidelity, of Malice and Uncharitableness; that thou mayest delight to dwell amongst us, and mayest be our God, and we thy People.

Bless and preserve our Sovereign Lord King *GEORGE*, and grant that all, who are in Authority under him, may faithfully endeavour to promote thy Glory, and the Good and Welfare of this Church and Nation.

Look with Pity and Compassion upon all thy afflicted Servants: be a Father to the Fatherless; heal the Sick; supply the Wants of the Poor and Needy; and grant that whatsoever is wanting of outward Comforts to any one, may be abundantly made up by the inward Consolations of thy Holy Spirit.

Bless all my Friends and Relations, especially —; reward all who have done me Good, and forgive all who have done or wished me Evil; and vouchsafe to
every

every one of us, from the highest to the lowest, whatever in thy great Wisdom thou knowest to be needful both for our Souls and Bodies.

And now, O most merciful Father, from an humble Sense of thy great Goodness, I adore and praise thy glorious Name; for all the Manifestations of thy Love and Kindness vouchsafed unto me. I bless thee for my Being, for my Reason, and all the Endowments and Faculties of my Soul and Body; for my Health, Friends, Food and Rayment, and all the other Comforts and Conveniences I enjoy; for thy continual Care and watchful Providence over me, through the whole Course of my Life; and particularly, for the Preservation and Protection of me the Day past.

Give me Grace, I beseech thee, to make a right Improvement of all thy Blessings; and be thou graciously pleased to take me, and all that belong to me, this Night under the Care and Protection of thy Fatherly Providence. Give thy holy Angels Charge over us, and grant us such Refreshment of Soul and Body as
may

may enable us chearfully to go through the Duties of that Station wherein thou hast placed us. And when thou shalt be pleased to call us out of this World, O! let us be found in the Number of thy faithful Servants, through the Merits of our Blessed Saviour and Redeemer, Jesus Christ; for whom my Soul doth blefs and praise thee, and in whose most holy Words I sum up all our Wants, saying,

Our Father &c.



A Prayer,

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*A Prayer, which may be added to
the daily Evening-Prayer, on the
Lord's Day.*

Again return my most humble
I and hearty Thanks to thee,
O Lord my God, for the special Blessings of this thy sacred
Day; that I have been admitted to the
great Privilege of joining with thy faithful
People, in their Assemblies for public
Worship; to offer up my Praises and
Prayers to thy divine Majesty, in the
Name of our blessed Redeemer; to hear
thy holy Word read and preached by the
Ministers of thy Gospel; and that I have
had farther Opportunities for employing
myself more privately in thy Worship and
the Care of my immortal Soul.

I earnestly beseech thee, O Lord, to
pardon all the Wanderings and Disorders
of my Mind, and whatsoever else thou
hast seen amiss in my Attendance up-
on thee: and graciously to accept my
sincere,

An Evening-Prayer, &c.

sincere, though weak, Endeavours to serve thee.

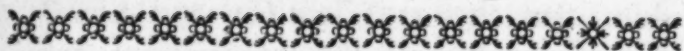
Cause thy Word, which I have heard or read, to abide in my Heart, and to bring forth the Fruits of a holy and religious Life.

Help me, by the use of all the Means of Grace and Salvation, to grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, fitting me more and more for seeing and enjoying thee my God, and my blessed Redeemer, in the Life to come: and grant, when I shall cease to praise and serve thee with thy Saints on Earth, that I may continue to be so employed with the blessed Spirits in Heaven.

I heartily beg the same Blessings for all my Fellow-Christians, recommending them and myself to thee, my heavenly Father, in the Words, and through the Intercession of Jesus Christ thy Son, our only Mediator and Advocate.

Our Father, &c.

A Morn-



A Morning-Prayer for a young Person.

 Lord, my heavenly Father, I humbly adore thee, as the Maker and Governor of the World, the Author of my Being, the Preserver of my Life, and the Giver of every good Thing.

I heartily thank thee for the comfortable Rest which I have enjoyed the Night past; that thou hast preserved me in Safety, and raised me up in Health.

I bless thee for all thy Goodness to me, ever since I came into the World, and especially for the Advantages thou hast given me, by the Instruction and Improvement of my Mind in the Knowledge of thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ my Lord.

Grant, O Good God! that the Sense of thy Favours may so deeply affect my Heart, that I may shew forth my Thankfulness, in the whole Course of my Life.

I am

I am thine, O Lord, by Creation, by Redemption, by my Baptism and Christian Profession, by all the Obligations which thou hast laid upon me. I desire to be thine also, by a willing Dedication of myself to thee every Day of my Life, and by a constant and faithful Endeavour to improve myself to thee.

I beseech thee, in thy great Mercy, through the Mediation of my blessed Redeemer, to pardon all my past Offences, and to enable me, by thy Grace, to discern and to amend whatsoever is amiss in me.

Help me ever to remember the Christian Principles which I have learned, and the pious Instructions which have been given me; and never to depart from the good Way in which I have been taught to walk.

Incline my Heart to all that is good: grant that I may be modest and humble in my Carriage and Behaviour; chaste and pure in all my Thoughts, Words, and Actions; true and just in all my Dealings; respectful and obedient to my Superiors; innocent and inoffensive in my whole Conversation; faithful and diligent in the Discharge of all the Duties of that State and

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Condition of Life wherein thou hast placed me: and teach me to fear and love thee, my God, above all Things; and to do to all others, as I would they should do unto me.

Make me perfectly contented with my Condition, and thankful to thee, who hast given me all Things necessary for Life and Godliness. Let thy good Providence always take care of me, and let me never place my Trust and Confidence in any Thing but in thee.

Take me, I beseech thee, into thy Protection this Day; keep me, if it be thy good Will, in Health and Safety. Preserve me from the Vanity of my own Heart, and from the Temptations of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. Help me (thro' a Sense of thy constant Presence with me, and of the Account I am to give unto thee) so to govern all my Thoughts, Words, and Actions, that I may reflect upon them with Satisfaction at the Close of this Day.

Let thy Blessing be upon every Member of this Family: Upon all my Relations and Friends; upon all, whom I ought and whom I desire to pray for.

I hum-

A Morning-Prayer, &c.

I humbly commit both myself and them
to thee, O my God, in the Name of Jesus
Christ our Saviour, and in the Words which
he himself has taught me.

Our Father, &c.



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*An Evening-Prayer for a young
Person.*

MOST gracious God, my heavenly Father, as I began, so I desire always to end the Day, with blessing thy Holy Name, and imploring thy Favour.

Honour and Worship, Praise and Thanksgiving, are due to thee from every understanding and reasonable Creature. I heartily bless thee, that I am of that Number whom thou hast made to serve and love thee, and that thou hast moreover revealed thyself to me, by thy Son Jesus Christ my Redeemer, and encouraged me to call upon thee in his Name.

I humbly thank thee for thy daily Care of me, and particularly for that good Providence which hath been over me the Day, past; that thou hast preserved me from the many Evils to which I am justly liable; and hast bestowed upon me so many good

An Evening Prayer

Things which I have not deserved; especially, for whatsoever thou hast enabled me to do, which is acceptable in thy Sight, and which I can reflect upon with Satisfaction.

I humbly bewail, O Lord, the great Weakness and Corruption of my Nature, and the many Errors and Transgressions of my Life. I humbly beg thy Mercy in the Pardon of all my Sins, through the Mediation of my blessed Redeemer; particularly of whatsoever thou hast seen amiss in me this Day, either in my Thoughts, Words, or Actions.

Grant, O Lord, that the Sense of my Unworthiness may always keep me humble, and work in me an unfeigned Repentance of all my Sins; and let the Remembrance of them ever excite me to a greater Care and Watchfulness for the Time to come. Strengthen in me every good Purpose and Resolution. Whatsoever Part of my Duty I know not, do thou teach me; and wherein I have done amiss, help me to do so no more.

Leave me not, O Lord, at any Time to myself, nor in the Hands of my spiritual Enemies. Preserve me from those

Circum-

Circumstances, that would prove a Snare or Temptation to me. Let thy good Spirit continually enlighten and sanctify my Mind, directing and assisting me through the whole Course of my Life.

Fill me with a Sense of my constant and entire Dependence upon thee, that I may always commit myself to thy Care, and be ever satisfied with thy Disposal of me.

Teach me so to number my Days, that I may apply my Heart to true and heavenly Wisdom. Help me to live in a daily Preparation for my great Change, keeping my Conscience void of Offence, both towards Thee, and towards Men: and grant that I may be always so employed, as I shall wish I had been when I come to die; that whensoever thou shalt think fit to call me out of this World, I may readily and thankfully exchange it for a better.

Take me, I beseech thee, into thy gracious Protection this Night. Preserve me, if it be thy good Will, in Health and Safety, and grant me that Rest which may refresh my Body, and dispose me to
serve

An Evening-Prayer for a young Person.

serve thee chearfully, both in Body and Mind, the ensuing Day.

I heartily desire the Good of all Mankind, and pray unto thee for the Purity, the Peace, and the Enlargement of thy holy Church; for thy Direction and Assistance of all its Governors and Pastors, particularly those under whose Guidance I am placed; for the Welfare of my Country; for a Blessing upon the King, and all in Authority under him; for the Relief and Comfort of all that are in Affliction; for all my Friends and Relations; beseeching thee to hear and to accept me, and all that call upon thee, in the Name of Jesus Christ, our only Lord and Saviour, who hath taught me thus to pray: *Our Father, &c.*

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